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*The Guest at
the Gate*

Edith M. Thomas



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New London, Conn, Sept. 2nd 1896

Thomas Hutchinson, Esq.,

Dear Sir:

Your most kind letter gave me a very deep pleasure - for it praised that into which a large part of my heart and soul has entered. I thank you most sincerely for the generous pains which you have taken to particularize the things that pleased you in the book. If it were by me, or if I remembered any entire poem from it, I would copy & send the same; as it is, let me send you one for sonnet; and believe me
Yours very truly,
Edith M. Thomas

1887

By EDITH M. THOMAS

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and Lyrics \$1.50

Cassia and Other Verse . \$1.50

Children of Christmas and Others
\$1.25

The Guest at the Gate . \$1.50

RICHARD G. BADGER, PUBLISHER
BOSTON

THE GUEST AT THE GATE

EDITH M. THOMAS



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The Gorham Press
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Dedication

TO OTRADA

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THE GUEST AT THE GATE

Ye souls that in the flying moment dwell,
And in that moment dwell secure, content,
Have e'er ye thought how, by some woven spell,
Within that little moment might be pent
An age, whose myriad sands were slowly spent
By all save thee? To whom the age had
 passed
As water-drop that slips a grassy bent —
As leaf that whirls away on autumn blast,
While thou didst trace a dream, foredoomed to
 wake at last!

PART FIRST

I tell the tale. Believe, or disbelieve!
But it shall haunt you, haunt you, haunt you
 still!
It was a wedding, on a summer eve,
In County Clare. The rest be as you will.
The eglantine of dew had drank her fill;
Arcturus's light was gone beneath the west;
The old moon stood above the Dancers' Hill,
And smote with wavering gleam the sedgebird's
 breast,
Which then in sleep began a song about a nest.

A song about a nest! How oft, how oft,
The bridegroom's heart had throbbed around
 that theme,

As summer came on meadow, grove, and croft,
And touched with lovelight every fretting
stream!

How oft, and oh, how oft, in waking dream,
Had he beheld a wide-flung cottage door —
A window gemmed with mellow candle-beam,
When two should be as one forevermore,
And nought in this dull world be as it was before!

And of the bride herself, what shall I say?
Needs be, her heart, true-timed, responsive
beat.

And now she has stepped forth in sheen array,
From mother and from sisters, as is meet:
In voice, all strange to her, but clear and
sweet,
Hath answered to the priest, and bound her
troth.

Into the maze of music-charmèd feet
Bridegroom and bride are stolen both;
And there, they hearten other tongues and ears not
loath!

“Bring now the flagon from the cobwebbed cave,
Oh, bring! And let this merry Noon of
Night,
Flushed from the dance, find breathing space,
to lave
His dark lip in a vintage stored from light
For many a year, to serve this hallowed rite.
Was it not so? Speak up, and tell us dame!”

The mother smiled assent. A teardrop bright
Was in her eye — uncertain whence it came;
Between some joy and grief are tears too sweet to
name!

“Have done. ’Twere treason now sad thoughts
to think.

Bring here the eglantine all wet with dew,
And wreath the cup the bride herself shall
drink;

And in the cup let float a rose leaf, too!

Now, pledge the happy pair — the pledge
renew;

Long years be theirs, of joy and peace entire!”

.

Into the Past the light-wing’d moments flew,
As in the hungry outer dark expire,—

No more to be relumed,— a chimney’s sparks of
fire!

From guest to guest, meantime, a rumor went!
One asked to see the bridegroom, at the gate,—
An aged soul, by time and sorrows bent,
Whom none might censure, though impor-
tunate.

“Beside, who knows what fortune may await,
Whereof she may the jealous guardian be;
Weak creatures oft bear out the will of Fate;
And she may bring auspicious news to thee,
That thou art heir to fine estates beyond the sea!”

The laughing bridegroom rose among his
guests:

“Be merry, though on me you spend your
mirth.

All mortals' riches be within their breasts;
Why, then, compute my fortune's future worth,
When now I am the richest man on earth ?”

With this, ere they another jest can launch,
Assuring swift return, the groom steps forth,
From out that circle of warm hearts and
stanch,

To where, beneath the moon, all things in slumber
blanch.

And, if a music from the Dancers' Hill
Stole downward through the shifting, silvery
mist,

That music did not cross the cottage sill!
It was not for all human ears, I wist;
And yet, the bridegroom could not choose but
list!

An ancient dame was at the wicker gate:
“Although, dear youth, unwelcome be this
tryst,

Weak creatures oft bear out the will of Fate;
A wedding gift I bring. Mine age hath made me
late.”

A withered hand upon his wrist she laid,
Just where the life stream flicked its ivory
walls.

The tumult of the joyous hour is stayed
Without surcease of joy; and calm enthalls
The driven tides of life. Her voice recalls,
In tones worn thin and querulous with eld;
“A prize to kindle strife in princely halls —
To thee and thine it passes, uncompelled!”
And, high in air, a wreath of flickering gold she
held!

“This, for thy bonny, bonny bride,” she said.
“Look! how abashed the moonbeam, by its
light!

But first, I’d see it on thine own fair head;
’Twill gain an added splendor in her sight.
One kiss, before thou goest,— mine by right
Of alms-deed to the aged and the frail.
Now, hasten back, ere deeper grows the night;
And tell the waiting guests thy wondrous
tale.”

He stooped, and kissed her,—pallid, in the moon-
light pale.

PART SECOND

Fruitful and moist, the nights by Shannon’s
side;

And, while good folk are sleeping, unaware,
The bleaching linen’s warp and woof divide,
To let the crowding grass blades breathe the air!
Thick hung the dew upon the bridegroom’s
hair,

And drenchèd were his garments with the dew:
" 'Tis something chill — yet neither here nor
there!"

The pulsing tides of life their course renew;
And on his lips, his cheeks, now health restamps
her hue.

He turns him to the house he late hath left.
Dead is the revel — shattered at mid-height!
Silent all voices; and the place bereft
Of taper, torch, and twofold, twinkling light
From wreathen sconce and mirror burnished
bright.

"If this be jest, too far they push the jest
For man to bear, though on his wedding night!"
So, with half-anger fluttering in his breast,
He beats upon the door; but none rewards his
quest.

At last, are footsteps heard within; and now
The door is opened, though with cautious care;
And sharply comes the challenge,— "Who art
thou?"

Halt, traveler, till thine errand thou declare!"
"Where be my guests and where my bride,
say where!"

"Thou art deluded, man," the voice replied;
"Here be no guests, no bride, no festal fare:
But since this roof hath never been denied
To one benighted, here, till morning, shalt thou
bide."

The bridegroom — he hath crossed the mold-
ering sill;
And he hath met a face he hath not known
Among his kin! He can but murmur still,
“Oh, tell me whither, whither are they flown;
For whereso'er they are, I seek my own!”
The cottager — he brings his candle near,
“From what strange outland world hast thou
been blown,
Wearing that garb of many an antique year—
Thou, young and fair to see,— no lad of ours thy
peer!”

The bridegroom spake with many a flaw and
start,
As when from sleep one turns to sleep again,
O'erborne by heaviness of head or heart,
While fruitless tears from eyes half conscious
rain.
Fitful his speech, by sobs broken amain,
As he a fluttering hand reached high in air,
Nor heeded how that hand did naught contain:
“Say where is gone my bonny bride, say where!
A wedding gift to her, — this wreath of gold, I
bear.”

“O dreamer of thy dream, whate'er it be,
Could I thy most strange sorrow understand,
Some power to aid might Heaven grant to me.
What gift, what wreath,— declare!” With
this demand

The hermit stills in his that fluttering hand
Then, as upon some hearth, when night is
old,
The sudden gust revives a smouldered brand,
Half-memory flashing forth from ashes cold,—
The dreamer saith, whence he hath had that wreath
of gold.

“Ah, stranger dear,” the cottager replied,
White faced and trembling now, himself,
I wis,
“All cure on earth has been to thee denied!
Between that baleful gift and farewell kiss,
Entranced wert thou, in other realms than
this,—
To thee, a moment’s sojourn, and no more;
Nor those within that moment could’st thou
miss,
Who, day and night, and night and day out-
wore
In watch for thee and thy lost footstep at the door!

“Ay, long they mourned for thee,—thy bride,
thy kin.
I can but tell thee what my grandsire told,
When, by yon hearth, a child, I garnered in
The ripened legends of the days of old.
He crossed himself, that good man saintly
souled,
In saying, here a wedding once had been,
Of such vast cheer as now we ne’er behold:

The bridegroom disappeared — no more was
seen;
And thou art he,— ill-starred beyond myself I
ween!"

That lightsome wearer of an hundred years
(Sped as some music-wafted dance of fays)—
He shook his locks bedewed with Night's cold
tears;

His lips he moved, yet dream-fast was his gaze.
"Of all ye speak, no memory by me stays.

Good sir, it cannot be that I forget!

The wedding-guests — I know their sportive
ways.

As me they serve, they shall themselves be met;
With merry jests in kind I will repay them yet!"

"Thou hapless soul!" the hermit host began—

"Nay, rather, let me cast aside all fears!

This tale of thine — 'tis of some other man.

Their voices still be ringing in my ears;

And she — perchance, with laughing face, she
peers

Amid these shadows, where she lists to hide;

But true her heart, howe'er her fancy veers.

If she be missing still by morning tide,

Then, will I seek, and ask, through all the country-
side."

.
The lonely cottager, of fate forlorn,
Received that wanderer, from old-time lost.

And him have men beheld at eve or morn,
Beneath the centuried yewtree gnarled and
moss'd;
Or, far afield; or, on the bridge that crossed
The glassy millstream at its shadiest bend.
Never on locks of his fell Time's white frost;
But visions out of Youth had he, to friend;
And Youth was in his face when came the quiet end.

THE CLOAK

The Torn Leaf of an Ancient Story.

PERSONS

HORATIUS, Champion of the Roman Forces.

MARIUS, a Herald.

HORATIA, the Sister of Horatius.

FABIOLA, Cousin to both.

The Attendant of Horatia and Fabiola, Spectators,
Various Voices of the People, etc.

SCENE

PORTA CAPENA, where tidings are awaited of the
Contest between the Roman and the Alban Forces.

(HORATIA and FABIOLA, alone, their attendant
having withdrawn a little distance from them.)

HORATIA.

There flies no signal in the distance yet.
The road stares vacant on my aching eyes.

How sore a burden weighs the heart — to wait,
And wait, not knowing what we do await!

FABIOLA.

And say'st thou so? I thought that well we
knew
What we await,— the Io, Roma, Io!
And victory bright, upon her shining arms.

HORATIA.

Art thou so good a Roman, little one?
Think at what cost of blood comes victory —
For every pean, legion anguish-cries,—
Of those who die, and those who must outlive;
The moaning, ghostly field — the mourning
hearths
In Rome, in Alba, too! Is victory worth
Such cruel cost?

FABIOLA.

Thy words have knocked within.
My heart saith, "No." My lips, Horatia, said
What other lips have said — nor less, nor more.
Valeria — thou heard'st her, when she said,
"If I six brothers had, all dear as life"
(But she hath none, nor sweetheart yet hath
she),
"I'd give them all, for sake of lordly Rome
And that dread Name of Rome, that none may
speak!"

HORATIA.

But thou?

FABIOLA.

Oh, for myself, I would give none,—
Not one, least-loved of brothers, though Rome
fell!

'Tis strange, how I love soldiers, yet hate War,
And iron Mars, whose call doth soldiers make!

HORATIA.

So ever hath it been, with women all:
Before the sweet Andromache took leave
Of him she never was to see again —
Before these Seven Hills were girdled round,
Did women say what thou hast said to me,
“Ah, how I love the Soldier, yet hate War!”
This word sisters of ours, unborn, shall use,
Nor, searching their sad hearts, the reason
find.

FABIOLA.

I know not why — 'twere not so, if I knew —
But I do love the Soldier, friend or foe!
Now, if I had a lover was a Soldier,
What triumph mine! 'Twere nought, to wait
all day,
And all night, too, at this Capena Gate,
But for the faintest rumor from his camp,—
The least breath that had stirred his martial
plumes!
Forever would I see the sunbeam flash
Along his sword, and turn its blue to white!
Forever there would be a ringing sound

Within my ears — and it would be his voice
Leading the armèd host to victory!

HORATIA.

But, if that soldier-lover were thy foe,—
Thine, and thy country's foe, what could'st
thou do?

FABIOLA.

No country has a woman but the heart
Where hers is lost! On internecine war
The Gods do frown! And such a war I waged,
If I against my heart's brave sovereignty
Would take up arms for any other state!

HORATIA.

In truth, a darling traitor thou wouldst be —
A darling, faithful, little traitor, thou!
A traitor . . . yet, how can we surely know
But that Tarpeia, who (the legend saith)
Dreams still her dark dream 'neath yon mon-
strous rock,
Loving the Sabine King, did serve but love,
When she betrayed her city to his hands?
But tell me, O my dear Fabiola,
What thou wouldst do, if thou a lover had,
Yonder, amid those purple Alban hills,
That seem to sleep beneath the veil of Peace —
A lover, whom thy froward heart would chose,
Bred to the feud that Alba holds 'gainst
Rome —

And now, a soldier in a hostile camp;
In ready arms, couched nightly on the turf,
Praying the stars (those stars we, too, invoke)
To crown the strife with Alban victory?
Hadst thou a lover that was, also, foe?

FABIOLA.

Had I such lover, I would do as thou —
Or any other, sadly blest by Fate . . . (After
a pause)

My cousin, I would broider him a cloak,
Who sleeps beneath the stars, on Alba's turf,
That he might wrap himself against the cold,
And dream (in Heaven!) of me. This would
I do,
Had I . . . the happy skill of thy deft hand.

HORATIA (*startled*).

Broider a cloak? Long hours of toil 'twould
take.

FABIOLA.

But toil is soothing to uneasy thought —
'Tis, next to slumber, the great charm for
grief . . .

My cousin! In the shady ilex grove,
That holds Diana's temple, there's a bird,—
A nesting bird, that, ever and anon,
Turns a bright glance upon thy morning task.
The bird hath seen, with envy, eagles twain,
Wide-wing'd, crook-beak'd, and golden-eyed,
they were,—

Fledged by thy hand, and cherished by thine
eye —
All, wrought upon the chlamys' night-black
field!

HORATIA (*pleadingly*).
Thou wilt not —

FABIOLA (*with tender playfulness*).
Nay, the bird will not —

HORATIA.

Betray!

FABIOLA.

The bird has told me, but none else, be sure:
(*Half singing*).
That bird no flight essays,
That bird no feather moults;
And in its swelling throat
The shrill note dies unborn:
So secret is the nest,
So charm-bound is the bird —
So bound to keep its troth!

HORATIA (*with full eyes*).

I trust thee — would say more, but may not,
now.
But while we wait here, doubting what may
come
From the blind urn that holds our clouded lots,

Repeat, Fabiola, the song you had
From the Greek stranger who was homesick
here.
The Death-Wound was it called. It touched
me near.

FABIOLA (*repeats the Song*).

A shadow,— he fled to Proserpina's realm,
Swift, from the field of the brave where he
died.
Bright were the spheres that shone under his
helm;
But the wound,— the wound in his bosom,
gaped wide!

All that of old time in battle were slain —
Shadows — the shadow saluting, arose:
And they cried, "Thy heart it is cloven in
twain;
Dauntless thou wert, but legion thy foes!"

"Nay!" 'Twas the shade of Achilles that spake:
"In arms hath he died; but he died not of
steel;
This is no wound that a sword could make,
This is no wound that a javelin could deal!"

Speechless the shadow among them yet
gloomed —
Speechless as yet, in the Court of the
Dead. . . .

Then, light through the darkness — lo, how
it bloomed,
Where the Lesbian rose, with garlanded
head!

“Will ye not see, though he fell in the strife,
He was slain by a blow that Mars never gave!
For Love, and of Love, he had yielded his life,
Ere the blade of the foeman his bosom
clave!”

HORATIA (*sufferingly*).

Oh, what a piercing shaft of truth is there!
Wounds there may be, that mask a deeper
hurt;
And some are dead ere the reputed blow:
Which wounds are lethal, none may guess,
save those
Who have been stricken by the kindred shaft.
Such knowledge Sappho had, subtle and sad:
I'll read, again, the sighing verse she left.

FABIOLA.

But thinkest thou, all sorrowful, wise skill
With her descended, out of reach? We, too,
Ev'n thou, and I the simplest Roman maid,
Might in our bosoms bear discernment true.

HORATIA.

Thou wert a careless child but yesterday,
And now — but I will quickly tell thee all.

Yonder, beneath the purple,— not of Peace!
Oh, yonder is my only, only love;
I thought for country's sake, to spurn him
hence ——

Spurn him from out this treasonable heart!
It was not to be done! But I, alas!
When last we met, proud,— vain, proud words
I used ——

Valeria's words — thou understandest —
words!

“Come not again,” I said. “I must obey,”
He answered. But it was even then, to him
(Or, so I deem), his heart the Death-Wound
knew!

“But should an Alban lover e'er prevail
O'er thy great mother, Rome, a token send,
Something thy hands shall work, with thought
of me.”

So, spake he, with dim, hyacinthine eyes. . . .
“A token send” — those words remained —
and wrought !

FABIOLA.

I understand — The Cloak!

HORATIA.

But canst thou guess,
How often, as I sat, to work thereon,
Amidst the shady ilex grove, I dropped
My work, because I could not see to set
The needle right ——

FABIOLA.

I understand — for tears! (*both are sobbing*).

HORATIA (*after an interval*).

If thou hast any other tender song,
Mellowed with grief, repeat it to me now.
But stay. Is there not something on the road ?

FABIOLA.

Only the whirling dust before the breeze.

HORATIA.

The Song, Fabiola.

FABIOLA.

'Tis without name,
But grieveth for Eurydice, perchance,
Or other loveliness lost to the earth,
And followed down, beyond Apollo's smile,
By yearning fancy, to the house of Dis.

Art thou in Elysium, Sweet ?
Then, the turf beneath thy feet,
Though beyond the light of day,
Quivers with a dream of May.
Blossoms of the Under Land
By a morning breath are fanned.
On the lilies of the dead,
Love-light from the rose is shed,
At the passing of thy feet.
Art thou in Elysium, Sweet ?

Art thou in Elysium, Sweet ?
Then, the souls that thou dost meet,
Dreaming through the shadowed ways,
Lift on thee a startled gaze:
Memories of the earth upwell —
Yes, those souls break Lethe's spell!
Such a truce may we two keep —
Such a truce with Death and Sleep,
When within their realm we meet! . . .
Art thou in Elysium, Sweet ?

HORATIA.

Elysium, O Elysium! It were well —
But yonder comes the herald. Child belov'd,
Nay, sister of my heart, no longer child,
We will rejoice as one, or weep as one,
When we have heard the issue of this day.

FABIOLA (*hurriedly*).

Would it were so; but Fate can build, can
wreck,
For one and other by the selfsame stroke!

HORATIA.

Thou borrowest thy counsel from the Sphinx:
Sometime, unriddle this blind speech, for me.

FABIOLA.

Hark what the people say. They send along
Some rumor freshly spread. The cry of
"Rome,"

Blends with ascription to thine ancient house.
What may it mean ?

VOICE OF A MAN.

We hear, the event of war
Hath been determined, not by clashing hosts,
But by three champions chosen on either side.

HORATIA.

Not the Curiatii ?

FABIOLA.

Not the Horatii — no!

VOICE OF A MAN.

These were, indeed, the six — and nobly
matched!

(*Enter MARIUS, the Herald, who addresses himself to HORATIA.*)

Lady, thy dearest brother gives thee joy.
He bade me haste before, and greet thee thus,
Saying, “My cause hath ever been thy cause,
Our cause but one — and that, the world’s
cause — Rome!

Tell Rome I come; and, on the ancient way,
Whence heroes all look home midst glad
acclaim,
Beside the Gate Capena, even there,
Be thy lov’d eyes the light that leadeth home!”

HORATIA.

Herald, what of the Three ’gainst whom he
fought ?

FABIOLA.

What of the Two, Herald, that fought by him ?
Two brothers dear to him as very life!
Comes he alone, where Two with him went
forth ?

HORATIA.

Hush, my Fabiola. Speak, Marius, speak!

MARIUS.

First, champion; then, avenger, hath he stood —
Horatius, whom, by little, I forerun.
He comes alone. O lady, they are dead, —
Of Roman youth the gallantest, save him
Who shall, hereafter, mourn with thee — not
now,
While Victory's rushing wings beat back all
tears!

HORATIA.

Fabiola — Support her, for she faints,
Outworn with waiting. (*To Attendant, who
has drawn near.*)

ATTENDANT (*to HORATIA*).

Madam, 'twould seem that one
Or other of our slain by her was loved.

HORATIA.

I knew it not. Oh, wherefore knew I not ?
She would have shown her heart, had mine
been quick.

Care for her tenderly till she revives. (*Turns
to MARIUS*)
Now, Marius, tell me how this contest turned.

MARIUS.

In the first onset, the Horatii lost
That valiant pair thy house must ever mourn.
But thy great brother,— theirs and thine,
 achieved
What had been all impossible to man
Unfavored by the Gods! They filled his mind
With sudden cunning. Clear of all misdoubt,
He turned, he fled! — behold, he did but seem
To flee; and the Curiatii gave pursuit —
One after other. Turning, each, in turn,
He met; thus, breaking up their threefold
 strength,
Stood forth, and fought with each, and over-
 came.
Yet he ——

HORATIA.

Delay not, tell me, in a word,
If by his sword all three Curiatii fell ——

MARIUS (*exultantly*).

Fear not. Both champion and avenger, he!
There are, who deem he might have spared to
 slay
The last with whom in deadly strife he closed.
Such frown on valor propped by artifice;
But more approve ——

HORATIA.

No matter. What was done ?

MARIUS.

Why, when the brave Horatius closed with
him,—

(The last, and best that Alba sent) he feigned
To plead for mercy, like a man forespent.
Whereat, Curiatius did withhold his hand:
But in that moment of mistaken ruth
Horatius leaped to life and arms again!
And soon, unfeignedly, the other cried
For mercy —

HORATIA

And he gave it not!

MARIUS.

Why, no:

There is no mercy that a man may yield,
When public wrong and private grief forbid.

THE VOICE OF A WOMAN (*from among the Spectators*).

The little maiden draws the breath of life
Once more. But it would seem what she
regains,
The lady loses, as by mutual change.

ANOTHER WOMAN.

Nay, nay, not so. For though the blood re-
cedes,

And leaves a face that unknown trouble hints,
The heart within is great — is of her race.
She will not faint. See, how erect she stands!
And yet, we all must marvel at her mood,
So far from joy august. She blanched, to
hear
Of the Curiatii's death. Why should this be ?

HORATIA (*as FABIOLA, recovering, looks bewilderedly about her*).
My poor Fabiola!

FABIOLA.

Oh, pity me!
I loved him — dark, with the dark eyes of
Love —
Thy brother, tenderest of all the Three —
He, so magnanimous of thought and deed!
But he who soon will come, with hateful
spoils,
Is fair, is cautious, fit for strategies!

HORATIA (*half to herself*).
Although distraught, she speaks the truth, the
truth.

VARIOUS VOICES (*as the crowd gathers at the Gate,
HORATIUS approaching*).

Room for Horatius! Brave Horatius comes!
Neither the day, nor sight, can we forget.
Children, mark how a hero bears himself!

(Enter HORATIUS, with triple spoils of the slain CURIATII. A richly embroidered cloak is thrown over one shoulder. HORATIUS advances, but is arrested by the sight of his Sister. Speaks:)

My sister — if my sister thou canst be —
In tears? No! Tears such pallor never
mates!

In anger? I know not. But this I know,
That, never till this strangest hour, Horatia,
When I had cause for triumph, hath dissent
Swayed thy quick spirit from its proud re-
sponse.

Why art thou silent?

HORATIA.

(Advancing, lays her hand on the cloak thrown over
the shoulder of HORATIUS.)

This — where hadst thou this?

HORATIUS

Fond labor of some Alban maid, I deem —
Vain labor — since the turf shall hide the
form

Her dreaming thought beheld so bravely
wrapped.

A Roman soldier shall this broidered cloak
More gallantly array, than the rude youth
For whom his doting maiden wrought her
gift.

Some Roman of thy choice shall wear it —

HORATIA (*snatching the Cloak*).

Never
Curiatius wore it once — and if but once,
It is enough! The hand that took his life,
No more shall touch it — hand defiled, ab-
horred!

HORATIUS.

What is it thou dost say?

HORATIA (*recoiling, and then, in utter abandon-
ment*).

Abhorred art thou!
O Gods! Take me from this dark world
away!
Perchance, at crossing of the ebbless flood,
I'll meet him sent untimely to the shades.
(*To herself*)

HORATIUS.

What sayest thou? Speak clearly out, to me!
(*To those about*).
She does but murmur. Tell me what she
saith.

FABIOLA.

She loved Curiatius, whom thy hand hath
slain —

HORATIUS.

Loved him?

HORATIA.

O conquering hand, that might have spared!
Let me not touch thee more, nor see thee
more!
Would thou mightst wither now!

HORATIUS.

Thou dost defy
All that our altars teach, our laws enjoin.
The fealty great Rome and thine own house
By due demand of thee, hast thou foresworn;
On both hast trampled, for a rude, strange
love,—
This losel vaunted by the Alban Camp!
Thine errant course is run, thanks to this
sword
That from before thee cuts away the lure,
And flings it from thy stolen path! Come,
come,
Give back the Cloak, that I thy treacherous
toil
May shred, and scatter on the scornful wind!

HORATIA (*pressing the Cloak to her bosom, and
folding her arms over it*).

Thou shalt not have it —no! Horatius, no!
Only with life itself I yield it thee.

HORATIUS.

Then, piecemeal, must I tear it from thee —
so! (*Tears Cloak with sword-point.*)

HORATIA (*struggles*).
Only with life itself —

HORATIUS (*thrusting with his sword at HORATIA*).
Then, with thy life!

FABIOLA (*to those standing by*).
Will no one hold his hands from this rash act ?

A WOMAN.
He knows not what he does, nor what is done —
The furies urge him on. Wrest the blade from
him!

(*Only FABIOLA attempts to stay HORATIUS.*)

HORATIUS.
Stand off! Avenger must Horatius be.
(*He runs HORATIA through the heart.*)
So, die, thou blemish on fair womanhood —
Thou needs must die, thou recreant of my
house!

FABIOLA (*To those around her*).
Too late! too late! Why stood ye all aghast,
Gazing upon this act, as though ye saw not,
Or as ye were not men, but dumb beasts all ?
Cowards, ye might have saved her, but saved
not!

(*Drops to the ground and throws her arms about*
HORATIA. *Murmurs soothingly.*)

Follow the light, that through the darkness
leads:

It goes before thee surely — follow Love.
Thou couldst not here have dwelt without that
light.

(*Lays her hand upon HORATIA'S heart, then*
brokenly)

Oh, she is gone — stopped utterly the heart.
That was her parting sigh. And heard ye not
The soul indignant passing on that sigh? . . .
. . . I shall be mad — I cannot bear the
day. . . .

Horatia! “Art thou in Elysium, Sweet?”
Thou art, I know — thou art with them —
but I —

Why do I linger here? . . . I linger not!
It is my shade ye look upon — my shade!

(*To those near; and then, with swift movement*
drives a dagger to her own heart.)

I am already gone — I, too, with them! (*Dies*)

(*Attendant bends above the two. Covers the face*
of HORATIA with portion of the torn cloak. HORA-
TIUS is led out dazed by those who have accompanied
him from camp.)

A WOMAN.

Hath he done this — or, Destiny, hast thou!

ANOTHER WOMAN.

May we be saved from Ates, seen of none!
Well do we know there is a hidden flame
That sleeps within the harmless wood until
We bring fire close — then, out the spirit
 leaps,
Red-spoiling, as it goes! Beware, I say,
Of anger like to his! For Ates waits,
To spread therefrom the ruin that she loves!

FIRST WOMAN.

“Loves!” Oh, the mocking echo in that
 word!
'Tis Love that under all doth here lie slain,—
The innocent, sweet Love, undone by Hate!

SECOND WOMAN.

Yes, and by War that is the hands of Hate —
War loved by man past any woman's love;
Be, then, our hands forever set 'gainst war!

VIOLET AND MYRRH

There are two cities that bear the names of the most
odoriferous plants, Ios and Smyrna, violet and myrrh,
and Homer is said to have been born in one and to have
died in the other.— Plutarch, *Life of Sertorius*.

Born in Ios, dead in Smyrna,
Violets for his dawn of being,
Myrrh to waft his soul outpassing!

(Matters not if in those cities
He but knew a beggar's portion,
Breaking bread of scorn or pity!)
Thus of Homer runs the legend —
Legend true to-day, and ever,
Of each poet since great Homer.
Such the lot for him commingled:
Born in Ios, dead in Smyrna;
Purple-cradled, with the violet
Unto him the light is ushered;
And for him the light declineth
Lapped in myrrh and incense-wafted.
Such the splendor he inherits
Earth for him holds naught of common,
Though between his morn and even
He from door to door should wander,
Breaking bread of scorn or pity!
Like the blind Mæonian Father,
Like our Sire of Song Immortal,
Every poet since great Homer
Hath a heaven-greeted entrance
And a royal proud outpassing:
Myrrh and violet for his birthright,
Costly bitter-sweet his portion,—
Born in Ios, dead in Smyrna!

ART THE PURSUER

I

It is the Tidings speeds the bringer,
It is the Need that arms the doer,
It is the Song that finds the singer,—
Aye! Art, forever the Pursuer,
 Leaves this and that behind,—
 Seeks one among the few,
 On whom its choice to bind . . .
 And what, if Art seek you?

II

Oh, then, as waits the string unsmitten,
As waits the marble without features,
As waits the true last word unwritten,—
As these to you are but your creatures,
 So ye are unto Art;
 Docile to be or do,
 Wait,— soul and brain and heart;
 Ye cannot Art pursue!

DECADENT ART

They said to us, "Look, how the serpent's scale
The tints of the rainbow reflects!
How the honey-bee in the Colchian flower
No poison distilment detects!
Thus, even from basest and vilest, our Art
Her temple to Beauty erects."

We answer: "Let be that your Art can upbuild
From basest and vilest her fane;
Go, taste, if ye will, of the Colchian sweets,
Though madness soon kindle your brain,
And gaze on the tints that the serpent reflects,
Though ye reap but remediless bane!

"Ye know that your choice is of weakness, not will,
Because ye are old ere your hour;
To the honey of Hybla your palate grows dull,
So, ye crave for the Colchian flower;
And the sheen of the serpent ye praise, who are
blind
To the arc of the sun-lighted shower!"

NEAR WAKING

“We are near waking when we dream that we dream.”

I dreamed a dream of rounded pilgrimage —
Of a sweet place of sojourn reached at last,
Where wise was Youth, and where unsad was Age,—
Folly and Disillusionment were past;
And where all pledges were in full redeemed:—
I dreamed that I dreamed!

I dreamed that, now, no more dark, circling wings
Shadowed the meadow-nests; nor any more
The bird that strikes pursued the bird that sings;
Nor mortal harried mortal, as before;
Nor, anywhere, War's evil blazon gleamed:—
I dreamed that I dreamed!

I dreamed that the bow'd mourner by the hearth
Mourned not as once; for Heaven-truth did
yield
To the long pleadings lifted by the Earth,
And *Why* and *Whither* stood, at last, revealed!
Ah, yes! I was near waking, as it seemed —
I dreamed that I dreamed!

THE OPEN

I seek no throned beatitude
In drifting cloudland lost,
No alp prismatic-hued
With sun and frost.

Nor seek I buried glades
The mountains overbrow;
For me no breathless shades,
With dream-hung bough.

Mine be the intervale,
Wide — open — free;
The breeze, and the beaten trail,
And the wayside tree!

THE CHORUS OF TREES

We trees are your brothers. O children of men,
have a care
That ye war not upon us,— we who are pledged
unto peace;
Behold, every blow, every ill, that for us ye prepare
Rebounds to your scath, through the years, to your
sorrow's increase!

Your brothers — we stand to the skies, as we stood
from the first;
But ye, children of men, ere ye stand, all lowly must
creep!
Your servants — ye bring on yourselves the plague
of great thirst,
When ye strip from the land our conclaves lofty and
deep.

We stand to the skies — we elder and better than
ye;
With heaven have grace, for we speak with the
fountains of streams,—
The full-laden clouds, that would shun you and
pass to the sea
But for us, who will ask for the earth and for you,
as beseems.

We ask! And the channels of rivers are filled at our
prayer,
The laughter of rills, long silent, is heard in the land;
And the tiger of heat, that hath tracked you, is
turned to his lair! . . .
What will ye do when no more to the skies we shall
stand?

Also, ye mortals who envy and menace our state,
Have ye forgotten how once with us solely ye dwelt?
We were your refuge, your shield, from rapine and
hate;
Whence, ambushed in us, your rude-shapen arrows
ye dealt!

There is none that remembers save some old
dreamer of yours
Who fosters a roof-tree dear unto him as his hearth!
And the love of that tree in turn for the dreamer
endures
While its years and its rings increase, 'neath the
rough-armored girth.

We sing to that dreamer . . . The dreamer may
sing to the world
(But those who would slay us, our treasure, thereby,
shall not find)
Where Daphne is hid, like a flower at evening up-
furled,
Or Atys lies sleeping o'erflowed by the sweet-
scented wind!

Ay, and we trees to the dreamer as sages are known,
As prophets and heroes and minstrels, ingathered
of old:
From all of these, swaying in council, some murmur
be blown,
That, reaching your ears, your violent hands shall
withhold!

And well, oh, ye children of men, if a day ye decree
When the youngest among you, whose flower and
whose hope are at spring,
Shall kneel on the sod, with tender hands planting
a tree,—
A deed that shall grow with the years and the annual
ring!

FOR ARBOR DAY

Let dead names be eternized by dead stone
Whose substance Time cannot increase nor mar,
Let living names by living shafts be known,
That feel the influence of sun and star.
Plant thou a tree, whose griefless leaves shall sing
Thy deed and thee, each fresh unfolding spring.

THE FLAME OF SPRING

Yon leaves that have newly escaped from their
prison —
Whence got they the golden-green Light that
they wear ?

Out of what realm of the Faery uprisen ?
Fanned by what mystical, dream-laden air ?

And the Flame that is blown through yon grass
blades so tender —
That tremulous Flame of duration so brief —
I swear, it is more than the noonday's mere
splendor,
Transfusing the venturous blade and the leaf!

And the pale, first flowers, that arise like a vision —
Each with a wavering nimbus is crowned:
Oh, how have they gathered such Luster Elysian,
So lately deep pent in the obdurate ground ?

And the Light of a Hope, that inly is burning —
That responds to the glow on the leaf and the
flower —
Oh, what is that Light to which all things are turn-
ing —
Thou, too, O my heart, in this magical hour ?

That Light which without, which inly, is burning —
All-folding and lovely, yet nameless, its sleight:
I dream the whole tremulous world, in its
yearning,
Is fain to dissolve — to be lost in that Light!

MAIZE

I sowed the maize, the Inca's maize,
Within the red earth's furrowed ways —
I sowed with magic rune:
It scarce hath shown its lordly spear,
When list! I hear
The whisper of the maize!

That spear (become a falchion) sways
Through all the green and growing days
Of sweet, long-lighted June;
At mist-hung morn, or morning clear,
Still, still I hear
The whisper of the maize.

When tufted blooms a signal raise,
And bees, therein, make long delays
 At incense-burning noon,
Still, borne from far, or rising near,
 I hear — I hear
 The whisper of the maize.

And when its dues the ripe year pays,
When leans toward earth, with deepening gaze,
 The silver-brimming moon,
While amber grows the milky ear,
 I hear — still hear
 The whisper of the maize.

When on the breeze the wan leaf strays,
Amid the dim, forgetful days
 That follow summer soon,
Lo! shriller still, and all austere,
 I hear — I hear
 The whisper of the maize!

.
Amid the red earth's furrowed ways,
I sheaved the maize, the Inca's maize,
 And husked its golden boon;
Each lordly sheaf spake like a seer —
 And still I hear
 The whisper of the maize.

THE REFLECTION

So deep the bank, the drooping bough so dark,
That all unknown had yonder stream slipped by,
But that its ripples held one tremulous spark —
The star, the mirrored star, that watched on high!

So dark were all my being but for thee!
My life to death had crept in one dull dream,
Had not thy splendor chose to shine in me —
Thou, both my heaven and its star supreme!

THE DELIVERER

In at my window the wild bee flew,
Murmured and beat with her gauzy wing,
I set her free; but for all adieu,
As she fluttered forth she left a sting.

I stopped for a cry that I heard, one day;
The least of my fellows in toils I found:
As I cut the eating cords away,
The knife was turned, and I bear a wound.

WIND MAGIC

O minstrel of ethereal things
That take the heart with all unrest,
Sinking upon long-muted strings —
O March Wind — magic roamer — guest

Revisitant of vanished springs,
Blow me a memory from the West!

Blow, driving changeful light and gloom
Over the meadow's faded breast!
Waft, on the moment, strange perfume
From dream-ways, unimagined, blest —
The breath of violets, ere the bloom,
Blow me a memory from the West!

Fan up the sunset fires of old —
The phoenix in its cloud-bright nest,
The pennoned galleons of the bold,
Slow drifting past the home-hill's crest,
With spoil of crimson, bronze, and gold —
Blow me a memory from the West!

Set shouting now the treetops stark,
With Spring's delirious joy possessed;
Lift from the hearth the slumbering spark,
Then make the farthest star thy quest,
That glitters in the lofty dark —
Blow me a memory from the West!

Blow, floating up from Under-Springs
The Voice of One that loved thee best —
That vowed to ride upon thy wings,
When of this mortal frame divest!
That Voice to thy wild harping sings. . . .
O March Wind, this is all my hest:
Blow no more memories from the West!

A SONG OF THE DESERTED NEST

I sing the Nest Deserted,
Whence young and old have flown,—
The house that Love once builded,
Yet Love hath left it lone!

The very air did brood it,
And brush with sighing wing;
The passing summer shower
Thereon its tears would fling.

The bough that roofed the nestlings
(Yet not their flight restrained),
Shed down a leaf of crimson,
Not frost but pity stained.

Then, she whose work is beauty,—
The elfin spinner grim,—
That nest with gossamer covered,
To make its sorrows dim.

And, since to cradling music
'Twas used, both eve and morn,
I send a Song,— to friend it,
From out a heart as lorn:

I sing the Nest Deserted,
Whence young and old have flown,—
And Love, the builder, vanished
In distant skies unknown!

FRIENDS IN GRAY

Till morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray.
— *Paradise Regained*

Lo! I have grown so gray with time,
I make me friends with all things gray!
With silvery mists that rise and climb
Upon the footfalls of the day;

With musing summer skies o'ercast,
When not a wind may list to blow —
But cloudland, leaning vague and vast,
Throws argent lights on streams below!

I melt, I merge, in autumn meads,
Where gossamer cloth-of-dreams is spread,
With shimmering drift of feathery seeds
The unregarded wild hath shed;

With glistening rain, with sprinkled rime,
With sea-foam dry, or wind-blown spray —
I am become so gray with time,
I find my friends in all things gray!

Methinks, that oft they say to me,
“We, too, are dim and silvery-sad;
Our grayer garments brushing thee,
Thou mayst forget how thou art clad!”

And I, discerning them as well —
A pilgrim bound the self-same way,
Their veiled passion strive to tell —
We are the Soul of All Things Gray!

THE BLUSHING OF THE EARTH

Whatever of earth, O Spring,— O divine one,
Thou coverest not with thy mantle of green,
The same in that moment thou kindlest to blushing,
Lending it rose-light — ardent or faint:
Whence, next to the emerald ever is seen
The tint that responds — as the nimbus to saint!

Blushing, the scalloped sheath of the leaf bud;
Blushing, the stem as if drunken with wine;
Blushing, the shoot at the root of the beechtree
(Felled with its leaves in the autumn agone);
Blushing the buds on the wilding vine —
And the bark shows warm as the brown of the fawn!

Yes, and the furrow that long has lain fallow —
Look, where the lip of the grass it hath kissed!
It responds, to the foil of that kiss, with a life tint
That never in winter its sadness could show:
Even the clod may no longer resist —
O Spring, the touch of thy finger aglow!

Warm umber the mould by the sunlighted woodside
That hems the low pasture gushing with
green. . . .
The Earth,— the kind Earth,— ah, look how she
blushes
With prescience of flowers,— of roses to be. . . .
I am Earth's child — to me thou wilt lean,
And lend of this blushing — lend roselight to me!

LOVE LIGHT

Sometimes upon the summer hills
A flooding tenderness is shed.
The low green interval it fills,
As fills the silvery stream its bed.
One moment past it was not there,
Or were mine eyes not yet aware ?

That Light — it comes with flickering morn
At harvest noon, on sunset plains,
And when the fields look old and lorn,
And on the bough no leaf remains;
And it can reach and overflow
The cruel spirit of the snow!

Sometimes it soothes the aching sphere
Of that white Planet dead in eld;
The myriad eyes of Night austere
From their keen wounding have been held!
But unbetokened is that Ray
Whose dawn may be midst dusk or day.

There is an ambient World All Love
Wherein our little world is rocked,
An arm beneath, an arm above,
Around our slumber warmly locked;
And Love Light thence, in moments blest
Goes trembling through some dreamer's
breast!

THE GARDENS OF BELLAGIO

Their gardens of enchantment lean
So wooingly along the lake!
A Soul of Fragrance — all unseen —
Steals forth, its captive souls to take!
So wooingly those gardens lie
Above the dreaming, moonlit lake —
And walking there, in days gone by,
I lost my heart — and gained heartache.
Oh, did you pass their open gate ?
Or did you fondly pass therethrough ?
Say, did you tarry there till late —
And did my heart not speak to you ?

THE MOODS

I dwell among the Many Moods,
They wheel around me, hour by hour,
As, all day long, the summer broods
Of dove, or raven, round their tower!
And sooner may that tower depart
And leave its restless flocks behind,
Than I may journey with my heart
Where us no more the Moods shall find!
So, if thou list with me to dwell,
Prepare thyself, O Guest, O Love!
For they shall wheel round thee, as well,—
Those broods of raven,— or of dove!

THE WHITE CONVOY

He met them leaning on the wind,—
Asleep, amidst the whirling storm!
The traveler left no tracks behind,
So fast the choking drift did form.

The traveler left no footprints more
Than they who leaned against the blast.
'Twas strange he had not known before,
How this White Convoy with him passed!

The Sentry from the farthest post —
The Guide — the gallant Voyageur;
The Brother from the hospice lost —
The Mother and the Child, that were!

'Twas strange, how strange! It seemed they
spurned
The peril of the tempest wild:
Their faces all towards him were turned,
On him, through lidded eyes, they smiled!

And through unparted lips they spake,
While lulling their words did fall:
"To sleep, to sleep — and not to wake —
To sleep, to sleep, to sleep, is all!"

.
He met them leaning on the wind,
Asleep, amidst the whirling storm . . .
The traveler left no tracks behind —
No trace above his sheeted form.

THEIR ARGUMENT

“They say, ‘short money, short shovels.’”

— *Newspaper paragraph.*

Be sure in the end you will not outwit them,—
You that are Lucre’s, they that are Labor’s;
As jurists of God they rise and acquit them,—
Your low-browed, toil-furrowed neighbors.

They troop to their work in the gray of the morning,
Each with a shovel swung over his shoulder. . . .
You have cut down their wages without any warn-
ing —
Angry? Well, let their wrath smoulder!

Faces like masks, neither glad nor sorry,
Stolid and silent each picks up the shovel.
They’re marching away from the mouth of the
quarry —
The pit where they daily grovel!

Meanwhile, you think with what answer you’ll fit
them,
When, listen and look! their shovels they’re
grinding.
Jurists of God — and you cannot outwit them —
“Short money, short shovels,” their finding!

Two cents and a half are docked from their wages —
Two inches — two and a half, from their shovels.
These low-browed toilers, they stoop to your
gages. . . .
But whose soul is it that grovels?

'TWIXT THE UPPER AND THE NETHER

“That little urchin playing in the ditch,
What think you he designs?—he’s throwing mud!
'Tis in his lusty proletarian blood
To hate us, for, to him, we are *The Rich!*”

“Ah, well, there’s more than that we must endure:
Look out! Young Auto and his motor-car!
Too late, with mud we both bespattered are;
'Tis in his blood; to him we are *The Poor!*”

OF THE MIDDLE WORLD

They fight across me as they will,—
The satrap and the slave;
With neither can I league, but still
Must hold what Heaven gave.

And Heaven gave me strivings blind
By Justice to be schooled,
And purpose branded in the mind,
To rule not, nor be ruled —

And Power, from power to clean abstain —
Let who will make or break!
I would not crave — I would not reign,
Though throne and footstep shake!

They fight across me as they will,—
The satrap and the slave:
A blow from them some day will kill
Whom neither cared to save!

Such price I pay for Freedom sheer
(’Twill glad me in my grave!) . . .
They will be girding year by year,—
The satrap and the slave!

The satrap is a slave at heart;
The slave, a cruel lord;
And each, as Time recasts his part,
Becomes what he abhorred.

But one shall rise my place to hold,
Though none acclaim him Brave:
The Middle World preserves its mould,—
Not satrap — and not slave!

THE CITY

Not mine with infancy’s film’d eyes
To greet first light from past thy towers,
That soar and dream in stainless skies,
Nor heard I first thy chime told hours:
Far, far from here my childhood’s morn —
But here was I reborn.

Not mine to taste the keen, salt spray,
That tingling smites thy downward face —

That stirs the blood, that breaks the fray
Of life, in street and marketplace,
Where, wearied, none be soon outworn!
But here was I reborn.

Here where 'twas given to indraw
The air of larger freedom, yet
To know the closer bond of law,
Here where Fate's lusty blows are met,
But not the pinprick and the thorn —
Here where I was reborn!

In million beating hearts (thine own)
A one pulsed world-heart first I felt;
Then, down upon thy paving stone,
In thankfulness, I could have knelt,
At one with all — of selfhood shorn —
Here where I was reborn!

Dear unto each his native earth.
Renascent life thou gavest me,
O city of my glad rebirth!
I am thy native; shut from thee
What but an exile most forlorn,
I who was here reborn!

Let who will count thee but as part
Of this wide land — I, in my soul
(More in the gravure on my heart)
Proclaim thee greater than the whole!
I am thy patriot. Do not scorn
Thy singer here reborn.

THE DEAD AND THE QUICK

The sky was steel, the wind, a knife.
I passed by Trinity's old graves,
Close-crowded by the city's life —
And yet, the city saves!

The wind did search me through and through
When, looking past the pale, I read
The name of one that no man knew —
A long, long century dead.

Oh, then — I know not whence nor why —
A breathless thought arose in me:
"He is alive, as much as I,
Or I am dead as he!"

A DREAM TEMPLE

New York City

My temple hath yon city roofs for floor;
For roof, the azure; and, to stay the roof,
A thousand alabastrine columns soar
In coiling smoke that, silent, steals aloof!

My temple builds itself at windless prime,—
At dawn,— or in the rosy eventime;
Ere garish midday, roof and pillar melt,—
And they are gone,— the Blest, who there have
knelt!

THE PASSING OF A FACE

“Thou changest his face, and sendest him away.”

In the long day of days to come,
Dear city of our dwelling place —
In the long day when we are dumb,
And other men these streets shall pace,
No more in thee shall then be known,
Be seen, the face that was our own!

The face that is of race the stamp —
The face thy founders wore when they,
Fair city, set thee as a lamp
To beacon bright upon their way,
Who saw the Atlantic surges close
Above their sunset's field of rose!

They set thee, beauty, as a light
To draw the peoples from afar,
From lands where earlier drops the night.
They came — and still they coming are,
Thy streets, beloved, know their throng,
Inexorable, fruitful, strong!

They are not of the founders — yet
A face that is of race they bring;
And heady currents here have met
That course from many an alien spring.
Their speech is strange, their looks are strange —
The face American shall change!

Shall change from that our fathers wore,
Sent down to us, with patrial names;
The face that is of race, no more,
O city, shall uplift their claims —
Not theirs (our fathers') and not ours,
Who daily feel our lapsing powers.

It hath been destined — it shall be,
That what was ours shall grow estranged,
Belovèd, and thou shalt not see
The face that was. It shall be changed;
And we, dismissed of name and sway,
Shall utterly be sent away.

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND

(In absence, by one who returns no more.)

Art thou there, between thy rivers,
With thy towered sea front bold —
There, between the dawn and sunset,
Lit with amethyst or gold?
Art thou there, enchanted island
I shall never more behold?

Dost thou loom, in mystic beauty,
Through the hazy, summer light,
Like the vision, seen in Patmos,
Of a city in the height?

Other times, a gray armada,
Anchored midst thy waters bright ?

Art thou filled with joyous tumults
That from far thy travelers hail ?
Do thy clangors grow a music —
Throbbing pave and vibrant rail ?
Still thy masted lights keep vigil,
While thy pleasures never fail ?

Art thou there, my haven city,
Open armed to each oppressed ?
Art thou there, with all thy strangers
Thou hast taken to thy breast —
Latin, Slav, and tawny alien
From an East beyond the West ?

Art thou there, midst all abundance,
From the wide world's gardens shed —
There, with palace dwellers — toilers —
Strugglers earning scanty bread ?
Palace dwellers, toilers, beggars,
But thy streets they still may tread !

Oh, the echoes of thy pavements
Where my feet no more shall be !
Art thou there, enchanted island —
Thou mine eyes no more shall see ?
Yet I know, past peradventure,
Loosed, my soul shall wing to thee !

SO MANY JOYS

I have so many joys. One joy of lovely sights
That down my days defile and dream along my
nights:
My soul is like a room with mirrors all set round,
Where Beauty once beheld hath infinite rebound.

I have so many joys. One joy of movement free,
That makes me sister to the winds and to the
sea.
Oh, verily, my hand hath pleasure all its own;
My feet that press the turf distinct delight have
known!

I have so many joys. One joy of hearts that
speak —
That ere a word can pass will tell me what I seek:
Such joy there is in being loved, but vaster joy
In loving. These twain joys there's nothing can
destroy!

I have so many joys. In yielding homage, one:
Such glorious creatures God hath made beneath
the sun!
And some of these and their white faith and deeds
sublime
'Twas given me to meet, as on towards God we
climb!

I have so many joys. One, memory linked with
hope;
For even as those stars struck out in Heaven's cope
Are shining still these thousand years upon the
earth,
So all the loves I've lost still shine upon my hearth!

I have so many joys. One joy of loneliness;
And one unnamed that bears me whither none may
guess.
Nay, not myself; for out of self afar I wing;
And only know, returning, I my Joys must sing!

UNDER VOICES

Behold the rose — the peerless one,
Sits laughing in the June day sun!
Her kisses wide around she throws;
So sweet and gracious her estate,
All hearts on her with worship wait —
But hark! A murmur upward grows.
It takes the wave of summer air,
It gathers increase everywhere,
And to the dim horizon flows:
“We grass — we wild flowers of the plain,
We lowly are, that thou mayst reign —
We are — that thou mayst be The Rose!”

Now, while this legionary sound
The leafy commonwealth flowed round,
 An Under Voice, in kindred tone,
Was borne from out Life's garden close.
From hearts unnumbered it arose;
 From spirit unto spirit blown,
Softly imperious it came,
Seeking the Great in deed and fame;
 "We win no trophies, mount no throne;
But foil your gifts, your valor bright;
We are the Dark; ye are the Light —
 We are — that ye may shine alone!"

Craftsman of Song — whoe'er thou art —
The Under Voice beats on thy heart,
 Crying: "No truth that thou mayst bring
Divinely to our waiting ears
(Whether it be full joy or tears)
 To us can come an alien thing.
By our humanity impelled
Thy thought to utterance is swelled,
 As draws the river from its spring:
We, though an unregarded throng,
Are still thy fostering source of song —
 And we are mute that thou mayst sing!"

PEACE AND THE WORLD-SOUL

I sent my soul to ask the World-Soul *why*
Life-loving men the chance of war still court,
Who all so soon this sweet, known earth must fly,
Yet haste to launch away to Death's dark port!

The World-Soul answered (not from Time nor
Space):

“Oh, fretful atoms 'neath your transient sun,
It is, that yet ye speak of sundered race,
Of alien tribe and law,— who are but *one*;

“For one ye are, wherever men shall fall;
Ye are but one (misnamed as ‘friend and foe’),
In whatsoever tongue your pale lips call
On whatsoever Name of God men know!”

Now — since my soul the World-Soul did entreat,
Through all embattled lands I fain would run,
Crying: “This knowledge, brothers, is so sweet —
Rest ye, and hear, *we are but one, but one!*”

VALKYR

He whom I loved loved no one —
Nor woman, child, nor man:
His joy was but in battle,
To lead his rushing clan.

I had the gift of magic —
Through changing forms I ran!
I was his white plume, floating
Above the serried van!

The plume was but a target,
Amid the flying scath;
And, then, was I his broadsword,
Annealed in fiery bath,
And through the hated phalanx
We cut a groaning swath;
But when his arch foe 'scaped him,
He brake me, in his wrath!

Then I became his corselet,
That next his heart he wore;
Ay, and his useless buckler,
For he fell wounded sore.
I was the wild, strange music
That went his soul before;
And "Hark!" he murmured, dying,
"There's singing on the moor!"

I was that wild, strange music
That sought his soul to win!
I led him onward, onward,
Till died the battle din;
Across the moor, the upland —
By breathless stream and lin,
I turned, to draw him to me
In regions fine and thin!

His eyes were oped, to know me,
 But bright with wrath their gleam.
I had the gift of magic —
 Fate, only, is supreme!
I bore him to Valhalla,
 In the red Planet's gleam;
And there he dreams of battle —
 And I am but his Dream!

THE UNSPOKEN WORD

There was a word for thee,
My lips could not set free
 In this confused sphere.
That word I yet must speak,
However far I seek —
 That word thou yet must hear!

I, past the throb of time,
The bounds of space must climb,
 Since thou hast these outwon.
With fated errand fraught,
I, seeking thee, thou, sought,
 We cannot be undone!

Thou, with no sensate ear,
My crying yet shalt hear
 When lips of mine are dust;
That word thou canst not miss.
It is because of this —
 In Immortality I trust.

QUATRAINS

I

THE PROFESSIONAL PEACEMAKER

Some glancing words we changed in sportive vein:
The Peacemaker, upon his busy way,
In soft, dull phrase bade us from wrath refrain:
Alas! our feud was dated from that day!

II

THE CASTLE BUILDER

In many a realm my castles rise, how fair!
How brave their turrets lost in cloudland height!
But 'tis the guests that I have feasting there,
That make my very Heaven of delight!

III

THE HAND THAT WRITES

The hand that writes, whate'er its task or theme,
Bold record of the hour or lyric dream —
Itself is writ upon, its palm the scroll,
Where Fate inscribes the issues of a soul.

IV

THE SOUL-MIGRANT

All things around thee change from hour to hour,—
States, seasons, earth itself, thy raiment flesh;
Less stablished here than these — change thou!
No power
Can hold a sunbeam in a netted mesh!

THE NEXT OF KIN

One night they spake of me — my kin,
Wide-wandered from the earth!
The dew that fell was from her eyes,
Who here did give me birth;
My father's voice was in the wind:
“I sowed, but there is dearth,
Or bitterness, as of the ash
The gale lifts from my hearth!”

My little sister (flown in Spring)
Leaned past the evening star:
“Till now I waited for thee here
Beside the crystal bar;
But that which thou hast done, alas!
From thee removes me far;
And in the wreath I made for thee
The flowers all weeping are!”

They spake of me, of me,— my kin,
In lengthened line arrayed;
From one to other passed the word,
On blanching lips effrayed;
They mounted far,— an ancient host,
By scorn or pity swayed!
Of me they all together spake,
Yet none would give me aid.

Then from the lessening line, came one
With mine own form and face:

“Thy grandsire’s grandsire knew me not,
Yet am I of thy race;
Thy good — thy ill — and all thou art,
To me mayst surely trace;
And, next of kin, I’ll stand by thee,
In the dread Judgment Place!

“I best can say how that wild blood,
Which ruled thine erring will,
Ran, undiverted, from my spring,
Thy fragile cup to fill;
And, when the rest thy doom invoke,
From Heaven’s midnight hill,
Thy next of kin for thee will plead,
And they shall hold them still!”

THE GHOSTS OF BATTLE

The twilight on the fighting plain —
Why comes it on so fast?
It is the rolling battle smoke,
Down like a garment cast!
It is the shadowing flight of souls
That from the field have passed!
Their bodies strew the fighting plain —
The dead and dying blent —
The dead that know not yet of death
(So late their flame was spent!)
And dying ones who turned to see —
Who *heard* them as they went!

And shades of heroes gone, that haunt
All fields where men shall fight,
From living lips the war cry snatch,
And answer from the height;
Or stoop to battle, looming huge
Amid the murky light!

And souls that soon shall fleeting be
Through portals gaping wide,
The mortal wound no longer heed;
For each descries a Guide —
A beckoning Hand — a Voice — a Face,
For him and none beside!

.
“Thy mother — close by thee I’ve stood
Since dawned this crimson morn!
As from thy childish foot I drew
The deep embedded thorn —
See now! I draw from thee the pain
Too bitter to be borne!”

.
“Thy comrade — long estranged from thee.
Whom thou couldst not forget —
Now we may speak — since this last cup
The mutual lip hath wet;
Come up, and see the struggling plain
From Heaven’s bright parapet!”

.
“Thy love, thy only love, that pined
Since War had thee in plight —

I have been with thee all the day,
Though hidden from thy sight.
The path we take — it winds, in peace,
The Other Side of Night!”

.

The souls that hover o'er the field,
The souls from thence released —
Awhile they lingered there in speech,
Then, sound and motion ceased.

.

And, loath and slow, the driven Dawn
Came trembling up the East!

THE RASH RIDER

He rode — it was his joy to ride,
For he was great and rash of soul!
And there was none to let, or guide,
For him who held a star goal.

He rode — he rode to right a wrong!
It was enough! He could not stay!
Whoever fell, his path along,
The Rider still must keep his way.

He rode — he rode free and aloof!
A steed he rode of heavenly race;
The flint fire flashing from the hoof—
It flashed upon my fallen face!

What then ? He hath attained his star.
He hath achieved his heart sworn trus !
He mounts to where Immortals are :
But I am dust — blown on with dust !

He rode — his heart was rash and strong —
Let fall the unjust . . . and the just !
He rode — he rode to right a wrong ;
He spurned the earth . . . he spurned this
dust !

I have no voice, save as the wind
Will cry for me — cry far and wide —
Will say : “ There was no ruth could bind —
It was the Rider’s joy to ride ! ”

SUDDEN RAIN

They flash upon the window-pane
From skies grown swiftly dark —
The wild, keen lashes of the rain ;
They make my heart their mark !

Even so can tears — tears not my own,
The very daylight blind ;
Across my heart the griefs are blown
Of all my human kind !

BLIND WINDOWS

The prisoner of a winter day,
Shut in past windows blind with frost,
I sit and dream, till far away,—
How far! my roving Thought is lost.

It goes, with Memory, to a fane
That crowns San Miniato's height,
Where one dim, wistful, marble pane
Lets in a formless dream-of-light!

There dwells the Virgin glorified,
And many a yearning taper glows. . . .
But oh, the World, the World outside,
What beckoning, rosy stain it throws!

“MIGHT HAVE”

I have lived my life, and I face the end —
But that other life I might have led ?
Where lay the road, and who was its friend ;
And what was the goal, when the years were
fled ?

Where lay the road ? Did I miss the turn ?
The friend unknown ? Our greetings unsaid ?
And the goal unsought ? Shall I never learn
What was that life I might have led ?

As the Spring's lost look, for one dear day
From skies autumnal on earth may bend,
So lures me that other life — but, nay!
I have lived my life, and I face the end.

A MOMENT OF PURE GLADNESS

Here's a moment of pure gladness —
Perfect as the dewdrop's sphere;
And it knows no more of sadness
Than the dewdrop fine and clear!

Whence it cometh is not told me;
And I dare not question why
Peace and Joy do so enfold me,
Lest the wondrous moment fly!

'Tis not in the day — the season,
Earth around, or bending sky:
Comes the moment without reason,—
Without reason will go by!

Heart of mine, so lightly beating,
Beat thou so, and be content!
Yes, although thou art unweeting;
Seek thou not thy Joy's descent.

Thine, this moment of pure gladness —
Dewdrop globing to its fall!
Taste, oh, taste its bright, sweet madness,
Ere it sink beyond recall!

Thine,— it suffers not partition
(Moment wafted who knows whence ?),—
Grief's deletion — Sin's remission —
Sensuous Joy scarce touching Sense!

THE LONELINESSES

Their voices everywhere might all have heard,
And still they speak. The winter-pillaged nest,
I hear it softly plead, "Make me a bird,
A bird of snow, with friendly brooding breast."

The tree, surviving from the forest-fire —
That liveth still, yet scarce of life gives sign,
A moan comes ever from its naked spire.
"Where are those mates that mingled leaves with
mine?"

The cabin old, with shivered window-pane
And grass-o'erflowing threshold, sends a cry,
"Come, see how those I love come ne'er again,
And yet the soul within me will not die!"

And there be those — my human kind are they —
That pass alone amidst the sounding street;
Perchance they know not, as they go their way,
For me, their hearts through all the clangor beat!

Thus speak to me, the Lonelinesses all;
To me alone; no other ear they win.
Ah, well! Like unto like did ever call;
I hear, for they and I are of one kin!

COUNTERPOISE

When I was a child and laughed in school
 (For laughter little or nothing would do!),
That I might not break our Draco's rule
 I thought of the saddest things I knew:

Of the homesick dark, when I tossed on my cot,
 And cried for the light and the homeward way;
Of the singing-bird my hand forgot
 Till, starved on the floor of its cage, it lay!

God wot that was many a year ago!
 Now, often I laugh that I may not cry;
And I think of the blithest things I know,
 And the follies dear in the days gone by.

I make me mirth where'er I can;
 I jest with the jester for brave relief,
Nor the griefs of the world too closely scan,
 Lest I sit me down in my helpless grief!

THIS WORLD

There may be Other Worlds to greet,
 When here I've said my last Good Night;
But ah! This World, so good, so sweet —
 How change for any in the height?

Its pictures on the folded eye,
 Within the muted heart its name:
And my soul afar, a wandering sigh,—
 “Oh, World, dear World, from whence I came!”

THE TWO TIDES

To E. M.

Child, I beheld thee, one night, swept in by the Tide
on this known shore of Being;
Naked thou wert, and unfain to be here, and thine
eyes were averse to all seeing;
Bitter and small was thy first-uttered cry, and filled
with unnamed desolation —
Thou, so encompassed by Love and by Joy in their
marveling proud salutation!

Child, in thy turn, thou shalt see me, rapt by the
refluent Tide swiftly flowing;
All sound shall be stopped from these lips save only
the last sigh of breath in outgoing;
The face thou shalt watch will grow strange, the word
thou wouldst hear — it shall not be spoken!
Then shalt thou sweep the dim seas for a beacon,
and storm the locked heavens for token!

O child, in that hour of the Ebb, left alone on the
ignorant shore, crying, "Whither?"
I charge thee, Remember, naught didst thou know
of the Tide that once brought thee hither,
Loath to thine heritage — thou, the darling of Life,
whom the banquet invited;
So much, and no more dost thou know, what
awaiteth the outbound pilgrim benighted,
What sovereignty royal — what dream beatific ful-
filled in Youth's restoration —
What galaxy crowding in welcome — what guest-
rites — what marveling proud salutation!

THE LAMP-RACE

Thou, in the lamp-race of life, that all human must
run,

Take thou the light from my hand, ere it dwindle
away!

Thou yet unwearied, undoubting — thou Heaven-
loved one —

With the speed of young feet, how the flame re-
kindles to-day!

Darkling the ways of the future, to vision outworn;
Thou, with the new-plenished light, its reaches
explore;

By thee shall the outpost a little farther be borne,
Nor fear thou the traveling shadow man casteth
before!

DOMIDUCA

Domiduca, the goddess who watches over one's safe
coming home.— *Marius*. Walter Pater.

Lead home, for now the light descends the skies;

Lead home, O goddess of the evening eyes —

And voice of whisper dying off the leaves —

And touch of velvet air on flowers that sleep

(To-morrow to be slain amid the sheaves)!

Lead home, O brooder of the brooding bird,

With wings bedewed, in grassy covert deep,

Sleep-lulled, with its half-uttered vesper-notes;

Lead home, O guardian of the couching flock,

By pools wherein the shadow lies unstirred;

Lead home the toilers all, who scarce can keep

Their pathway for encumbering drowsiness;
 Lead home, pilot of lonely skiffs that rock
On yearning seas where bright the moon-path floats:
Lead all these home, and of thy bounty bless —
 Lead home!

Lead home, O goddess of the evening eyes,
And voice of dim response to twilight cries —
 Whom ever, since a child, I loved past all,
Served past all deities befriending earth!
Lead home! . . . and, if I have no home, then rise
Before my way, and, with deceiving charms,
Build me a dream of mine own roof and hearth,
And thither in remembered accents call;
And lull me, sobbing, in remembered arms:
 Lead home!

THE LOST MOMENT

Among the wavering shadows of the night
Came one whose presence was a long-lost light,
Whose voice was long-lost melody divine,
Saying, "The Present Time alone is thine."

My prisoned soul beat out a swift reply:
"Since thou art gone, no Present Time have I,
But only the deep-remembered, sunken Past."
(The Presence vanished up the Heavenly Vast.)

It was my doubt the blessed vision grieved;
What comfort mine, had I the voice believed,
And plucked that moment's darkling, dewy bloom
In Shadow Land, though girt with waking doom!

FROM OTHER SPACE

I

How often dost thou pass my door,
Thine eyes unseeing evermore,—
Thy weary and thy sickened eyes,
That shut against the earth and skies,
Since I am not — not in that space
Where thou wast wont to meet my face;
— Since I am not — yet am I still,
And see thy sun his round fulfill,
Though shines for me Another Sun,—
My day is light, when thine is done!

II

At my fair door I, smiling, stand,
And reach to thee the soft white hand
That was thy comfort once, to fold!
Thine own grows shadow-thin and old,
And listless to its task it goes,
Since touch of mine no more it knows,
Since I am not — or, not to thee,
Who will not,— nay, who cannot see!
Since I am not — not in that space
Which my lov'd prisoner still must trace!

III

The roses in my garden-croft
(Near — yet not round thee, nor aloft) —

Sometimes from these a rose I break.
With thought of thee, its dew outshake,—
With perfume from each glowing leaf:
Swift wonder, then, o'erfilms thy grief;
And thou dost turn to seek from where
Such passing sweetness smites the air!
It comes, it goes; thy grief returns;
Alas, thy soul her soul-sense spurns!

IV

And, sometimes, have I, singing, passed,
And thought to wake thee, thus, at last.
I saw thee brush thine eyes, and start,
As thou hadst heard me with thine heart!
And then to grief's dull counsel yield:
"It is the reapers' song afield —
The echo fainting from the hill!"
How can I rouse thy dream-fast will,
Since I am not — not in the space
That bounds thy three-wayed reach and pace.

But when to thee, by moments fleet,
Afar the world's loud flood-tides beat
(A dreamed-out dream, within thine ear!)
Then to that knowledge art thou near,—
That in the air which round thee bends,
Another Real thy real subtends!
Then, hope is lighted in thine eye,
Then only dost thou cease to sigh
That I am not! For then is grace
To soothe thee lent from Other Space!

THE UNKNOWN USE

The music of the zither,
It trembles, and it dies —
Dies where? Ah, tell me, whither
The vibrant spirit flies!

The leaping, laughing fire
Goes out — goes where, past trace?
What goal may it aspire
In empyrean space?

And Life?— man's all of being.
Compact of soul and sense —
Oh, whither, whither fleeing.
Each moment, called from hence?

Each moment, partial dying
Foreshadows but the last;
Even our lightest sighing
Goes, freighted, to the Vast!

Fugitive Life, say whither,
With Beauty and with Power;
What Is It calling "Hither!"
That draws you, hour by hour?

Past hearing, past beholding,
Into Itself deflects?
By Unknown Law remoulding,
To Unknown Use directs?

THE YOUNG YEAR

With a soothing — with a soothing and a fretting,
Now a shadow-smile, and now a sunlit tear,
With remembering — with remembering and forgetting,
And a trembling Hope that cannot part from
Fear —
With a soothing — with a soothing and a fretting,
Comes the Young, Young Year!

With remembering — with remembering and forgetting
Scenes the spirit knew (yet knew not ever here)—
Gleams of sun and star in other heavens setting,
Wind and wave sounds falling from another
sphere!
With remembering — with remembering and forgetting,
Comes the Young, Young Year!

With a promise — promise and a wild regretting,
With a call that crieth to the inner ear,
With remembering — with remembering midst
forgetting
(As the tender green is thriddled by the sere),
With a promise — promise and a wild regretting
Comes the Young, Young Year!

LINUS: A LAMENT AT THE GATHERING
OF THE VINTAGE

Now the golden tire of Phœbus
Turns, to trace its shortest arc;
Now, no more sings Philomela
From the leafy turret dark —
Nightingale and swallow flitting,
Voiceless, to the Libyan shore;
Now, upon Demeter's daughter
Shuts the sunken iron door —
And now, young Linus is no more.

He was with us at the pruning
Ere the leaf shot forth the vine;
He was with us in the Maytime
When the buds were red as wine,—
With us, when the summer dewfall
Made the meadows silvery hoar,
Shared our nooning in the shadow,
Shared the toiler's homely store —
But Linus shares with us no more.

He is fled,— the well-belovèd
With the lighted eyes of dawn,
With the tresses of sea-amber,
And the footstep of the fawn!
If the red-eyed pack of Sirius
His fair-fashioned body tore,
There was found no stain of crimson
On the path his footstep wore;
Yet Linus — Linus comes no more.

He is strangely parted from us,
None received his passing-sigh!
Now, the evening-purple clusters
Heavy on the trellis lie:
When we crush those purple clusters
Filled with sweetness to the core —
Lo! it is the life of Linus
That the presses shall outpour;
But Linus we shall see no more.

He is gone with all of beauty,
Withered from the season's crown,
One by one, slow-faltering downward —
As these vine-leaves falter down!
Otherwhere is other mourning —
Ay, the boatman stills his oar,
Stays the shepherd, winding foldward,
At far cries that, searching sore,
Make murmur of *no more! no more!*

This the burden, this the sorrow,
Where they winnow out the corn;
This the burden breathing lonely
Through the hunter's unblown horn!
Say, to those that mourn Adonis,
Trampled by the mountain boar —
Say to those that yet mourn Daphnis,
On the misty threshing floor,
That Linus — Linus is no more!

Ask if they have hope of Daphnis
When the morrow spring is born:

Will he rise among the furrows,
Midst the tender blades of corn?
Ask the foresters if Cypris
Their Adonis will restore?—
Plenteous flowers wake after Winter,—
Not the flower that bloomed before!
And Linus — Linus wakes no more.

BION AND ADONAIIS

(SHELLEY AND KEATS)

I

Bion sang Adonais to his rest,
Who, then, swift beckoning from no earthly shore,
Drew, soon, the soul from out the singer's breast:
The dust of both two Roman grave-mounds store.
There, once, I deem I heard the Muse outpour
Her fond lamentings. . . . Nor had I been loath
My life to give, might they but live once more!
Bion and Adonais!— by my troth,
If I were Moschus I would dare to sing them both!

II

So might I tell how, once, upon the air
That set a-tremble the cool ivy leaves
(Wherewith our Bion's couch is spread so fair),
A Voice went forth: "For mine, a world-heart
grieves,
And, bending here, the more itself deceives!"

My heart-of-hearts* knows not the burial urn,
Nor darkness that the wizard Spring o'erweaves,
But lives, instinct, in later breasts that burn,—
In singing loves that toward the mount of vision
turn!"

III

And I would witness how the low-laid lyre,
Though dark with rust and many winters' rain,
The watchful, unseen Muse does yet inspire
To wake, for yearning ears, its olden strain.
There, as I stood, again, and yet again,
A golden fervor shook the broken string,
And golden was the purport: "Not in vain,
O Pilgrim, to yon tenderest legend cling;
For I was tuned to Love, and still of Love must
sing!"

IV

And once, my foot was on the very stair
That Adonais climbed, with strength outworn;
I paced that room where the hush'd midnight air
Received his parting sigh — "not all forlorn!"
Thus, to my thought, a Voice made answer, borne,
With liquid soothings, from the street below:
"I am the fountain, that, from eve to morn,
Crept singing round his dreams; and, Pilgrim,
know,
It is that song (a requiem, now) that charms thee
so!"

*"Cor cordium," the inscription on Shelley's tombstone.

V

There, lingering till the evening, roseate-gray,
 Came softly floating down that stairway old,
 I marked the neighboring casement's taper-ray,
 Where once, a-row, the sequent candles told
 The anguished hours of vigil, dim and cold,
 Till death-sleep Adonais overcame.* . . .
 Ye poets! thus, the Muses' fire ye hold,
 In kindling line: when death your light shall
 claim,
 The nearest comrade's torch shall catch the onward
 flame!

VI

Bion and Adonais — sound their sleep,
 Within a precinct of the Aventine!
 How can they know, if any come to weep —
 To pour libations of long-hoarded wine,
 And, afterward, as unto souls divine,
 Faith and heart-quivering love and homage
 plight?
 Yet, let us vow to them a house, a shrine,
 Where far-come pilgrims of a day and night
 May meet — may kneel, beneath their alabastrine
 light!

*Severn relates that in the last nights of Keats's illness a continuous light was produced by means of a connecting thread, by which, as fast as one candle burned down, it communicated the flame to the next in line.

THE WANDER-CALL.

It was my joy to wander,
Heaven bade my foot be free,
That I might forth and follow
The voices calling me;—
A calling from the desert;
A calling from the sea;
A calling from the Genius
Where men in cities be!

The wander-winds,— they took me
By ways unknown — or known;
Through morning lands a rover —
In starlit icèd zone —
Across the condor mountains —
By austral islands lone!
The seasons rolled unheeded,
The years are past me flown!

And Time and Term and Distance —
Of these I reck no more:
Along the River Ocean,
Lies many a neighbor-shore
Whose music-languaged cities
Make murmur to my door;
And wilds primæval cluster
With pageant lands of yore!

It is with me as ever,
The Wander-Call breathes clear
And I must forth and follow:
But now your far grows near;

And voices from the Trackless
Are ringing in my ear,—
A calling, calling, calling
Outside this dwindled sphere!

MY YOUTH

My youth — my youth brooked not defeat,
Deed following thought, with glowing haste:
Then, all sweet things did savor sweet,
All bitter things did bitter taste!

My youth — my youth had store of tears,
And lording Sorrow had full bent;
Mine anger set in rest keen spears,
And favors won at tournament!

My youth — my youth in black would go
Whene'er its idol fell in dust;
And breathed about a world of woe,
When Love, light-pinioned, cancelled trust.

My youth — my youth! How great the change!
Such wounds from Time — such sore defeat —
Such broken faiths — defections strange,
Unmoved I've met, and still do meet!

Such wounds, such wounds as thou, my youth,
Hadst opened oft, nor let to heal;
But now, I only grieve, in truth —
That I so little grief can feel!

FOILS

I

Give me drifted winter-ways,
Whence, returned, the ingle-blaze
Shall like altar-fire divine
Leap before these eyes of mine.
Give me hours of hungry dearth,
That I may possess the earth —
Find Olympian banquets spread
In the country wine and bread!

II

Give me Strife (who so love Peace!)
That, when furrowing wars shall cease,
Fruitful be the olives found,
Springing from that blackened ground.
I, who so love Love — ah,— yes!
Give me Hate and Bitterness,
That, when these are past and done,
Love and I may more be one!

III

Give me sleep, that I may feel
Clotho's hand new start the wheel
Of another day's bright spinning . . .
And when warp and woof are thinning,
And the daylight is half blind,
Give me Death, that I may find
Life, upon some morning height
Sheen and sheer above the Night!

HEIGHT AND DEPTH

Of Joy, who knows so well as I,
 Its nestling valley of delight?
Of Grief, its unveiled awful sky,
 Its loneliness upon a height?

The naked stars but say to Grief,
 They, too, no comfort see beyond —
To Joy, a sunlit, bladed leaf
 Can conjure like a magic wand!

KEEP ME FROM PRIDE

O keep me from all pride — from pride of power
Howe'er so wielded, hand, or heart, or brain!
If, once a child, childlike let me remain:
Softly let me live out my little hour,
Content, unasking, as the summer flower
That knows not if it shall be known again.

Keep me from pride, from pride, howe'er so sweet,
Of charitable deed, of high intent;
If wealth of many loves to me be lent;
Or kinship draw me onward to their seat,
Whom Thought absolves from sense of all defeat —
Of one transgression, keep me innocent!

Keep me from civic pride of strenuous race;
Let me but mark how Time's slow, silent storm
Hath overborne the marble shaft enorm,
And scornful Beauty from its pillared place:
Keep me in that humility — that grace
Of lowliness, that knows not its own form.

O keep me from all pride; but, most of all,
Preserve from that strange, lone, high pride forlorn,
Which through the world's wide pleasance goeth
shorn,
Of joy, and garmented in sweeping pall,
And doth itself the child of God miscall,
The pride that is but other prides outworn!

Keep me from pride! Let me inherit peace.
(Pride hath an ancient throne it must defend.)
With Thy Creation let me smoothly blend,
That, when, at length, from breathèd life I cease,
Unproud, unchained, the soul shall win release:
Oh, keep me from all pride unto the end!

THE BURNING HEART

I, whom the fires of life each day
Do heat to pallor — I, who sway
Forever in the breath of strife,
Not master, but the slave of life,
 A burning heart I bear!
Yet death will full extinction give,
Or kindly age a bound will set;
So, if I live, I shall outlive;
And if I die, I shall forget —
 I shall not always care!

Not then, as now, at Anger's shock
This burning heart its walls shall knock;
Nor shall its hopes, o'erdarkened soon,
Amidst a crucifixion noon,
 Waste into moaning air!
I, Passion's compassed fugitive,
Shall find release or refuge yet;
For, if I live, I shall outlive,—
And if I die, I shall forget —
 I shall not always care!

THE HEART THAT CRIED

She heard my heart a-crying, crying,
Amidst the rough waste of the world;
And she came flying, flying, flying!
She smiled — and back, Despair was hurled;
She gave her hand — and I was strong
To meet a viewless foeman throng!

She heard my heart a-crying, crying,
When famine struck within, and thirst
Devoured me, and, with sighing, sighing,
I sank beneath a charm accursed. . . .
There in the desert I had lain,
Unsought, by dearth inhuman slain;

But she — she heard my heart a-crying
(It cried for her — as yet, unknown!)
And she came flying, flying, flying,
For all my sighs to her were blown!
And naught — not all the Worlds (she saith)
Had held her back,— not Life, not Death!

Hers am I ever,— living, dying;—
It is enough to say, to know,
She heard my heart a-crying, crying,
And such sweet pity longed to show. . . .
Were pity all that she could give,
Almost on this my heart could live.

GRIEF GARDEN

Grief Garden had, at first, but bitter plants
That live and die, in grass, round unsought tombs;
Quick-springing weeds, whose germs were sown by
chance,

Sharp-scented box, childless of buds or blooms.

For flowers, Grief Garden had but those of rue,
Of wounding nettle — whose mere leaf is thorn —
Of nightshade, ever beading poison-dew,
And small, pale bindweed, creeping dim and torn.

The laughing summer world stopped, shuddering
here;

Unlovely and unloved, Grief Garden grew;
And if a day had passed, or if a year,
I had no way to know — nor ever knew!

I never knew how it could come to be;
But since long days-of-days have wandered by,
Grief Garden, once so harsh and drear to see.
Is, now, one fairest spot beneath the sky!

For here have gathered, past its dreaded pale,
Flowers, sweetest known — sweet vines that float
or cling;

The rose is seated here, the violet frail;
And young laburnums weep bright rain, in Spring!

In waves of bloom they rise, all thorns to hide;
With ministrance they crowd my garden seat.
Now, wherefore should I seek to dwell outside,
When these can make a living grave so sweet ?

SOMEWHERE, ONCE AGAIN

To J. T.

I may not see you till we die,
In some still haven of the sky,
The Karma-gales awhile gone by:
I may not see you even then,
Nor, till on earth, in stranger's guise,
We meet, and start with vague surprise;
But, by those starry lights,— your eyes!
I'll know you, somewhere, once again.

“I DO BUT FOLLOW”

Into the world, the giddy, untried world of man,
Round which the planets ran, and wondered as they
ran,
Into the world (that knows not its own name of
Earth!)
I did but follow, follow, through the gates of birth.
There were so many coming — importunate the
throng!
Wherever else, or how, through eons fair and long,
They all had dwelt, they now must beat upon the
gates:
I did but follow, follow, with my spirit-mates!
Out of the world, the giddy, wondrous world of man,
Where I have bided and have counted out my span,

There are so many going — so many softly gone —
I do but follow, follow, where they are withdrawn!

They strain upon the gates — the drawn or driven
throng

Who go, to be elsewhere, through eons fair and long:
I do but follow all my loves upon the Earth —
Follow through the gates that, elsewhere, be of
birth!

BEYOND THE BATTLEMENT

“Why over thee sweeps Sorrow’s moaning wave?
O Soul, why wilt thou not in Eunoe lave?”
List! voices falling with a falling-star.

“The ripple of my loss hath ceased to mar
Life’s gliding stream. At night none wakes with
sighs
To lose the dream of me; nor hungering eyes
Look out to see how dim have grown the ways,—
The sunlit paths of long memorial days.
This is my grief,— *so soon to be forgot!*
And canst thou smile? Then happier was thy lot.”

“Not so. But they who ceased for me their tears,
Themselves have been forgot a thousand years.
Beyond this battlement they once did lean,
Did see what all must see, what thou thyself hast
seen.”

THE OLD SOUL

“Not in Entire Forgetfulness.”

The Old Soul came from far,
 Beyond the unlit bound;
There had gone out a star,
 And a great world was drowned,
Since birth and death and birth,
Were hers, upon the earth.

For she had robed anew
 Time and time out of mind;
And, as the sphere of dew
 Unshapes into the wind,
Her raiment oft had cast
Into the wasting past.

There was no dizzying height
 She had not sometime trod,
No dungeon known of night
 But she had felt its rod;
The saint, assoiled from sin —
And saint's arch-foe — had been!

At cruel feasts she sate,
 Where heartless mirth ran high;
Through famine's portal strait
 Had fled with wailful cry;
All human fates had proved,
And those from man removed.

Yea, she had worn the guise
Of creatures lashed and spurned —
Even of those whose eyes
May not on heaven be turned;
No house too dark or base
To be her tarrying-place!

The Old Soul came from far;
And, all lives having known,
She nowhere touched a bar,
But all was as her own:
And this could none forget,
Who once her look had met!

The Old Soul came from far,
Moving through days and ways
That are not — and that are!
She turned on all her gaze —
Illumed,— deceived — illumed;
Yet still the road resumed.

The Old Soul came from far,
And toward the far she drew.
“Turn home, mine avatar!”
That voice, long lost, she knew;
She heard, she turned — was free —
No more to dream, but Be!

DARK WATER

Allegory of Vanished Youth's Ideals

I

Not always at the Castle's foot it lay,
Framed with wild boscage deepening year by
year:
But, on the moment, it might sink away;
And where but late had been a night-black
mere,
A little, greening valley would appear,
With forward grass and flower, and flitting
bird,
And all blithe, sunshine life, to April dear —
So boon the spirit of the place, unstirred
By all which, erstwhile, there, had both been
seen and heard.

II

For, erstwhile, had man seen defile along
That Water's silver-lapsing margin-sands,
A pilgrim-girded and a haggard throng,
Wearing the guise of other days and lands.
Down to that mirror-wave, with clasped hands,
With pale, set lips, they bent, to look therein. . .
And thus, for hours, they kept their dreaming
stands —
As they and marble, of one mould had been;
Nor aught, from that black water-glass their gaze
could win!

III

But, if that ruined Castle's guests, of yore,
They were — or if that Castle's donjon-prey
Upswallowed and forgot forevermore —
There lingered, now, on earth, not one could
say.
Forth, through the guardless gate they took
their way,
Where the Dark Water slumbrously outspread.
Black, black as polished ebony, it lay,—
At noon, at eve, with flaming day o'erhead,
Unrippled by the wind, that, shuddering, o'er it fled!

IV

Shadows,— they came and went, and came
again,—
These pilgrims, by some Shadow-Self com-
pelled,
Which, there embosomed, ever would remain!
As in some cloister corridor, of eld,
Where living footfalls wander now but seld,
The frescoes of a master-hand yet bloom,
(Strangely, from Time's deleting touch with-
held) —
Such portraiture, enriched in liquid gloom,
The Water guarded in its magic, nether room!

V

Yet none (that still be numbered with the quick)
This truth had learned, till came a Scholar
keen,

On whom the wintry years had heaped up thick
Their gradual snows, clothing with prophet
mien.

He, armored, now, to further grief or teen,
Dared converse hold with spirits good or ill!
He hath this mystery searched, its heart hath
seen;

Himself hath with those Shadows paced at
will —

Hath bent, with them, above that Mirror-Water
still!

VI

He saith: "Whoever to Dark Water fares,
He must, indeed, a Shadow-Self behold;
Yet not that Self which outwardly he bears;
For this, perchance, is waxen gray and old.
Another Self he meets — of angel mould:
'Tis like — it is! — yet, no! it is not he!—
So open-browed, so jocund, bright and bold;
So tender-hued, so fair — so dread to see,——
The Self that was to be, yet shall not ever be!"

VII

He saith: "The frescoes on these nether walls,
The longer seen, the nearer, clearer grow;
While he who gazes, more and more recalls
Delights foregone — forgotten, long ago!
Ay, while he dreams, from crypts far, far below,
A music wells, whose spreading, rhythmic
waves,

The charmèd heart with sweetness overflows,
As doth the Sea, that floods all waiting caves,
And raises every footprint from the shore he laves!"

VIII

And more he saith,— this Scholar without
dread,
Who dares to join with Shadows in their
quest—
Saith,— when in him awoke desire to thread
Those liquid galleries by enchantment drest,
In act to cleave that Wave with yearning
breast,
He found him in a little, greening vale,
Where sang the thrush, above a half-built nest,
The dew lay clear, on blossoms bright or pale,
And nothing lacked, that April loves, of fresh and
frail!

IX

Hence 'tis, a double rumor goes abroad:
The Sunlit Valley, only, some have seen;
To others, even from afar, o'erawed,
Dark Water ever spreads in ebon sheen. . . .
The truth? Perchance, it lies somewhere be-
tween.
Yet, hear what saith our Scholar, as beseems:
"That Under Land, so fresh, so dewy-green,
Is Youth, lit up with promissory gleams —
Youth, too, that mirrored Angel, mid its perished
dreams!"

AFTER-FULFILMENT

I

I hungered. They gave not. I hunger no more.
Now how they hasten to lavish their store —
Apples of gold, the Hesperides gave,
And mellow Falernian, brought from the cave!

II

I was nightbound and homeless. They cried,
“Hence, away!”
I have found the blind road into ambient day —
And they build me a dwelling and deck it with theft
Of marble and splendor, from palaces reft!

III

I entreated them, “Hear me!” They turned with
a jest.
Now, when the dove-silence broods in my breast,
They would make me dispenser of laughter and tears,
With words that are magic, enchaining all ears!

MEMNON

What was that music of the desert-bourn,
And who was he that had for heart a lyre —
Whose golden strings stirred only when the Morn
Stepped forth in purple raiment edged with fire,
While all around the world ran vague desire
(Ere yet in flower-kept dells the sun had shone),

To hold the dream, and let but sleep retire ?
What was that music, excellent and lone,
The Son of Eos uttered from his granite throne ?

It was of all sweet murmurs mixed and blent,—
Of wind and wave,— and such as if the dew,
Leaf-cradled, liquid utterance had been lent,
To tell how, from the heavens darkly blue,
It cometh on the earth forever new.

Yet that fond music, of the desert-bound,
From joys and griefs of mankind also drew;
Though every anguished, every hurtling sound
In the great deep of melody had long been drowned.

What was, what is, that music ? Breathe its name.
Say who is he that hath the lyre for heart ?
Who, smitten by auroral dew and flame,
And throned upon the lonely verge apart,
Hears all sweet, tingling sounds, where'er they start,
From round the world, and stores them in his breast,
To give them forth with tear-compelling art ? —
The Poet, blessing, and forever blest,—
The Child of Morning—and he sings at her behest!

No hour he knows but hers, of trembling poise
Between the dark and bright. Nor shall he greet
The darted beam meridian, that destroys
The last of dreams, and sends beneath man's feet
The shadow, that, amidst the glare and heat,
Could mind us how beside us Something goes,
That is of Dream Eternal — as is meet; . . .
But he, the Singing Son of Morning, knows ;
No hour but hers—is hers, from dawn to even's close!

LYRIC LIFE

Oh, do not ask me what I deem
Of all that men have said or done;
I will but sing you of a Dream
In which I walk — with which am one.

'Tis full of loveliness and fears,
Of griefs that have the face of joy,
Of joy that hath no word but tears;
And bold it is — and passing coy!

Mine, even from my earliest days,
When I stepped softly forth at morn,
And, breathless, trod in garden-ways,
'Midst sister blossoms — later born.

Mine, even yet, when I can lean,
And hear the sighing souls of flowers
That reach their paradise, unseen —
Where, too, went my lost Morning Hours!

This Dream, that carries me along,
By music is, itself, impelled:
Upon my lips there is no song
But is by Under-Song upheld!

So, do not ask me what I deem
Of all that ye may say or do:
Before your eyes I wave the Dream —
And ye shall see that It is true!

It hath not failèd me, young or old,
More secrets of Man's heart to show,
Than all your sages can unfold,
Or they that shepherd souls may know.

THE SHY HEART

Have you not known of hermits — not so rude
But that the hairy heart of Solitude
Did soften toward them, sometimes, and provide
Strange and dear friends vouchsafed to none
beside —

Rare singing-birds that one might seek to hear
(And seek in vain) through all the svlyan year —
Blithe pensioners, to feed from out the palm,
To hymn the daybreak in, to waft the evening
calm?

'Tis thus I make my plea: if, now, some heart
Keeps ever in its wilderness apart,
Yet is not all uncouth — not loveless all —
Unto that heart its destined boon must fall!
A god of loneliness there is, who sends,
For birds, some winged songs to be its friends,
That make their nests above the very door,
And set the whole small house to music, ever-
more!

THE MOTH

How many a flame I've hovered round,
And singed my wings at one and all!
For light was light, wherever found —
In low-ceiled hut or pillared hall.

I sought, with wild desire and blind,
The banquet torches grouped aloft,
The flambeau streaming in the wind,
The rosy lamp in chamber soft.

My drink, my food, my rest, was light;
Where light was not, was full despair;
And, swift to dimness passing sight,
My radiant, widespread wings beat air!

Inrushing from the Outer Dark
I came,— from regions of the waste;
There ne'er was arrow to the mark
So speeded with unerring haste!

For I was Human Life, and all
My lot was perilously bright . . .
My wings are burned away . . . I fall,
And sink into the Light — or Night!

SET APART

I

They asked that I would reach a hand
To those in worn and lagging plight,
As we went through the broken land.
But I (accused in all men's sight)
Knew what they could not understand,—
That one must set upon the height
A guiding flame ere eventime.
This only I could do aright —
For only I could thither climb.

II

They asked that I their wounds would heal,
And give sweet ease where had been pain.
But there were pangs they yet must feel
Ere ever health they could regain.
They cried for balms. Some one must steel
The heart — must nerve the hand and brain,
The caustic, cleansing fire to use;
Some one from Pity must refrain.
I was the one — I could not choose.

FOR WHOM

For whom those color-beams we cannot see —
The under-red — the over-violet?
For whom the tones that none hath listened yet,
No player yet enthralled in melody?

Those unheard waves of sweetness wander free,
They rise round strings that muted are, to them;
Those beams of color, mute in flower or gem —
They cross our path, on unseen errantry!

The teasing Fancy vainly makes her plea,
The eager Sense no clue to these may trace.
Shut with the treasures of mysterious space,
They are not for such mortal men as we.

For whom? Who, then, shall turn, at length, the
key,
And wander into Beauty we forego? . . .
I dream those tones shall sound, those colors
glow,
For men of subtler sense — the race to be!

“UP, MY HEART”

Up, up, my heart, and keep the road.
Up; do not mourn for youth gone by —
Or wingèd step, or cheek that glowed,
 Or sphery, wonder-widened eye;
For there is Youth, all youth beyond;
Thou mayest not of Youth despond.

Up, up, my heart, and keep the road,
Up; do not mourn the loves that die:
But let the Lost Years' roses, strowed,
 Hide the waste barrows where they lie:
For there is Love, all loves beyond —
That neither breaks — nor knows — the bond!

Up, up, my heart, and keep the road.
Up; do not stay when life goes by.
Let drop the goad, let fall the load;
 Bend toward a far, sweet, clarion Cry:
Up, up, my heart — up, and respond —
For it is Life — all life beyond!

RES REALISSIMA

Thus spake a seer of seers,
 "The world of sight is nought!
Reality inheres
 But in the subject's thought.

"Thy brave time-dream unfurled
 Returneth unto thee —
Thou soul of all the world —
 And no world else can be!"

.

I shut my sage's book!
 I looked upon a rose.
The rose sent back a look
 (Its purport — ah, who knows?)

It said — or seemed to say,
 "Not all of soul is thine;
I only came to-day,
 But yet a soul is mine:

"How dares thy seer of seers
 Exclude me from the Scheme?
The world, as it appears,
 Is, too, a rose's dream!"

LONE FREEDOM

How lonely is vast Freedom! I may go,
Or come, or sit in the still house of thought,
All idleness, unseeking and unsought,
From the gray morn to noon, to evening's glow;
None shall reprove, if vacant hands I show,
Or question why the task remains unwrought;
Or done, or never done, 'twill be as naught,
To every creature on the earth below.

How lonely is vast Freedom! I were fain
To follow any who would be my liege;
To say, "Do this," or, "To the world's end
ride!"
I am as he that once sought all in vain
To enter his loved city, in her siege;
"How lone is Freedom! " at her gate he cried.

EDEN-MEMORY

Now, when the Angel missioned with the sword,
At Eden-gate his burning falchion drew,
And when our sad first parents had passed
through,
How did that garden mourn their fate untoward!
The fourfold rivers from their urns were poured
With unconsolated repinings; and the dew
Did stand like teardrops in the heart's-ease blue,
And waned the lilies' golden honey hoard.
The breathing air henceforth was but one sigh
That all around that lonesome pleasance ran,
While Voices asked — and lapsed without
reply. . . .
Such wistful airs about my garden fan,
I dream, some grief of Eden still must lie
At heart of every garden made by man!

UNKNOWN

“A verse, a verse before I go,” I cried,
“That, though I vanish out of time and place
And glad encounter of the human face,
Some dwelling in the heart be not denied!”
(This between dream and deeper sleep untried.)
Then like a wind that groweth out of space,
Fraught and oppressed with murmurs of the race,
A Voice beneath the evening casement sighed:
“And why this boon to thee? Of earth, the best
Have closed the gracious lip, the lovely eye,
And in meek silence sweetly gone to rest,
Nor craved to leave behind a troubling cry.”
So spake the Voice, that I content might die,—
Content might join the Unremembered Blest.

MUSA IN EREMO

My Crito (skilled in all expedient lore),
Thou sayest, "Daughter of the slighted Muse,
'Tis in thy power a soother strain to use,
And less exalt; that, when great Mammon's door
At eve is open, and his slaves outpour,
They, hearing thee, shall for a moment lose
The goad of sharp-faced Care that still pursues:
So both were blest — each from the other's store."

To this thy counsel, I make answer "No!
I wish not any song of mine should lay
The fret of self-entailed, gain-getting souls;
But more and more brow-bent, still let them go;
And let me through the desert sing my way —
To die — or live, but not upon their doles!"

THE CATHEDRAL OF MILAN

There is a Gothic miracle in stone;
Fair Milan holds it in her conscious heart;
As though the work of archangelic art —
Not man's — it soars to God, sheer and alone!
Yet mark! With stain of centuries o'ergrown,
The lower courses of that temple start,
But whiten upward, till its spires, apart,
Flower in mid-heaven, like lilies freshly blown!
Such is the tabernacle of man's soul,
Thus was it framed — the fabric once how fair!
Then, as brute tides and seasons round it roll,
World-stains have gathered on it unaware;
But still the primal thought pursues its goal,
And blooms in candor, in the upper air!

ST. PETER'S

Here dwells the splendor of meridian day;
No mourning violet, no impassioned rose,
Its tint on marble shaft or pavement throws;
But here the joy antique abides alway.
I did not see the Roman victors lay
On Jove's high altar tribute reft from foes,
I did not see the Roman maids enclose
The white Diana, and their garlands pay;
But subtle sense, past sight, for me sufficed,
And this I say, "Thou comest all in vain,
Meek pilgrim — stern iconoclast — for lo!
This place knows neither Christ nor Antichrist;
This builded marble mount is but the fane
Of those who held Olympus long ago!"

THE HOUSE BESIDE THE SPANISH STEPS

This house beside the Spanish steps that spread
Like torrent changed to marble in its fall,
Once held the sweetest soul of poets all!
Hither your Roman pilgrimage be led:
Think, O ye lovers of the deathless dead,
The while ye read his tablet in the wall,
How, when beyond Love's ransom and recall,
He sheltered here a drooped and alien head.
From yonder window glanced his world-farewell,
Perchance while the nun's vesper, from the hight,
Winged holily his latest evening's flight.
In yonder chamber breathed his passing sigh,
While the one watcher, as the Shadow fell,
Smoothed the wide brow, and closed the dream-
less eye!

A LAST WORD

I bent to hear if aught thou mightst require:
"Yes, one thing only — but to me denied,"
Thou saidst; the rest in smile and murmur died.
To mystic-breathing embers sinks the fire;
The watchful candle-rays the stars out-tire,
When up from sleep thou comest, spirit-eyed,
And with a smile thy lips again divide —
"Yes, one thing,— *Life!*"— Death audits thy
 desire.

The years speed on. They distance me from thee.
(Or do they bring thee near?) Yet comes no day,
Whether that day be touched to peace or strife,
But I, as one that, on the fenceless sea,
Would greet a sail that silent holds its way,
Still greet thee gone afar — *Hast thou found Life?*

FLOWER DEATH

The flowers — how many years I've seen them die!
Their little hour of splendor being done,
They fold their listless petals from the sun,
And breathe into the air their passing sigh.
Dear were they ever, — when, beneath the eye
Of Morning, their sweet service was begun;
And, when their hour of beauty was outrun,
Dear were they, in their mystic passing-by.
Dear yet; but now, a subtle pain has won
A path into my heart — ah, tell me why?
Is it because, as human seasons fly,
Their lovely peers, that in life's garden shone,
Have bent their looks forever from the sky? . . .
The flowers — how many years I've seen them
die!

BEAUTY IN PENUMBRA

There is Supernal Beauty that subtends
All beauty wherewith mortal eyes are blest,—
A veiled Loveliness, that gives unrest,
When, fleetingly, into our sphere it bends,
And down these skies a gleam Elysian sends.
Watch! For that all-subtending Fairest-Best
Is now the Young Year's transitory guest,
And thereto something of its glory lends.
'Tis now, mid flickering dews of April's prime —
Mid blossom-winds — through shimmering
 forest-green,—
That for a brief, a trembling moment's time
We glimpse this Beauty-scarcely-to-be-seen;
Ay, with another pulse-beat, it will climb
By viewless pathway to its own demesne.

THE PLACE OF COMFORT

It was a leafy wildness fresh and lone,—
The place where I was comforted, and where
My soul arose, and shed its old despair.
A stream ran out to meet the sea's long moan,
Lulling with a soft burden of its own;
From bending branches breathed the fragrant air
Not rudelier than when a dreamer's hair
Across a dreamer's unwoke eyes is blown.

I cannot think what Angel met me there
(Unseen, unheard, nor yet through touch made
 known);
But, ever, has the heart within me grown
Buoyant as music following vesper-prayer,
Whenso, in wonder, past that place I fare,
Where I was comforted in summers flown.

A BURIED GRIEF

When that fierce spoiler of the Roman state,
Alaric, upon Roman soil lay dead,
His liegemen turned a river from its bed
And dug a grave where flowed the stream but late:
There, armed, braced upright on his steed, he sate
In wonted guise — the Western Empire's dread!
Then was the stream turned back above his head,
That none his grave should find, to desecrate.

Why do I dwell upon an ancient tale,
My heart, when I have given sepulture
To grief so stern it something had of wrath?
All inaccessible, and fenced with mail,
That grief (while this my being shall endure),
In deeps beneath a deep, its chamber hath!

CASSANDRA

I am Cassandra, as in dreams of sleep
Crying, "Beware, beware!" yet none gives ear.
None flees before the looming Shape of Fear,
None turns the footfall from the beetling steep.
Ye Heroes! whom unnumbered eyes shall weep,
I speak in dreams, ye will not, will not hear.
Accurs'd be War, that costs our world so dear!
Accurs'd be Mars, who makes your pulses leap!
I am Cassandra. On my soul was laid
Grave power of forecast. Ye are dead men
all!
The strewn field moans with the departing shade,
And moaning answers from the empty hall —
This of the wife, that of the plighted maid . . .
Oh, let the veil before my vision fall!

BRUTE WAR

O frustrate Race of Mortals, that can make
No stand against blind Nature's violence;
But storied towers, like wind-racked nomad-
tents,
Still to the shouldering Titan sway and shake;
And still, alike, the oak and flower-wand break
Upon the cyclone's torture-wheel immense;
These striding ills of fate, that sweep you hence,
Ye must with piteous, dumb endurance take.
Ye cannot curb the flood, the vorticed wind,
Nor city-heaving Titan hold with chains —
Ye can subdue a force as brutish-blind,—
Ev'n War, whose mouth is at your opened
veins!
For shame! my so submissive human kind,
To better days than ours, this deed remains!

INDICES

Laudet Diversa Sequentes

What signifies it that thy soul should crave
The sight of gold and purple, and such things
As appertain unto the state of kings? —

It signifies that thou wast born a slave!

What signifies thou kneelest to the brave,
And loudest in his praise thy plaudit rings? —
That thou'rt a trembler, and thy spirit clings
To thoughts of one who intervenes to save.

What signifies it thou extollest wealth?—

That Pluto smiles not on thy meager dower.

What signifies thou laudest Youth and Health?—

That one is flown, the other is to seek.

What signifies it that thou cravest Power?

Alas! It signifieth thou art weak!

AFTER-WORD

ASK TO KNOW

O all ye ages of the wistful Past,
Of saint and martyr and pale acolyte —
All ye that wore the paving stone in prayer,
And starved the body that the soul might feed
On dreams of what it should be when unhoused!
Within the bonds of Faith were ye constrained.
Ye asked for Faith alone — and Faith received!
Yet there were those among you smote the breast
And plied the scourge because in Faith they failed;
Nor knew, in Time's unfolding, there should come
(Of their own spirit lineage) a race
That smote the breast no more — no more be-
sought
The gift of Faith, but loosed the long pent cry
For Proof, though such, as in compare, might show,
By Faith's vague orb, a raindrop to the sea,
A star beam, to empyrean fire etern!

So, let none grieve that Doubt is in the world,
Clear, undespairing — wing'd as prayer itself;
Ay, let none grieve that Doubt is in the world:
It ever was! But, chidden and abashed,
Among the Sons of God, it long was spurned,
And passed unfriended, though befriending Man!
Now Doubt hath entered and hath guest rites
found;
And hope and heartening are in its speech.
Give welcome! Where so passionate a heart
As Doubt's ? to rest not, to be turned not — nay,

But where the road breaks off, there to begin
To push the Quest — to seek to touch — to probe
If Life, indeed, subtend the life we live —
To find the peopled Infinite — or the Void!
And if to-day it find not, still the road
That Doubt hath cleft forever open lies;
And other feet shall nearer, nearer draw,
And other hands armipotent shall beat
The Leaguered Gate until at last it yields!

For, as the world aforesaid asked but Faith
(And Faith received) we, with bared, beating heart,
A greater asking, greater must receive.
Then, grieve no more that Doubt is in the world,
Since Doubt hath bid us ask this Greater Thing —
Knowledge — Proof Absolute — hath bid us ask!
Oh, now I see that the decay of Faith
Does but forerun some unexampled Spring
Of crescent knowledge! And, as yester-year
Gave unto chemic change its greenwood crown,
To make rich leaf mould for the bursting seed;
So Faith, dismantled, yet shall serve an end
As vital as its office was, of old.
Needs be, that Faith, at length, should cease to lead
And comfort groping souls of stricken men:
One guide to man is given, in one same time,
One guide — no more; and that must vanish ere
Another to his journey be vouchsafed;
(So, Dante, on the Paradisic Way,
Lost Virgil ere he Beatrice gained.)
Importunate the guide we seek, and bold!

For though the Open Door were just at hand,
Enchanted to invisibility
Remains that Open Door till passionate urge
Of souls divinely discontent push through!

Ev'n as Man's earthly needs have all been met —
But only as each need grew exigent —
Light, warmth, his body's raiment and its meat,
And hidden balms, and countless conquests wide
Of sea, and air, of dumb, dividing space —
Each met, entire, but never till the hour
Of keen exasperate want — imperious siege —
So, have his soul's successive needs been met,
And so shall be, as each in turn cries out!
Cry out, O yearning Spirit of the Age,
Demand, for growing need, fulfilment new;
Nor grieve, if lapse the use of former days:
For who a rushlight longer bears about,
When once the deep stored earth has yielded flame?
Or who shall thank the oilspring when, as now,
The white electric beacon crowns its mast?
Oh, grieve no more that Doubt is in the world,
But trust the soul's last need shall be appeased:
Seek not that ye believe, but *ask to know*.

MEMORIAL OF THE UNREMEMBERED

“Heu quanto minus est cum reliquis versari quam
tui meminisse!”

Whom I have loved Fortune loved not;
Whom I remember are forgot,
As though they never breathed this air
That to my listening soul sighs, “Where?”

My saints have on the earth no shrine
Save in this shattered heart of mine,
Whose trembling walls are sinking fast,
Whose incense hath not long to last.

My prophets none did heed nor trust;
My conquerors, conquered, bit the dust.
Not with their latest breath they knew
That deeds of theirs could none undo;

Nor consciousness of might or right
Sustained them in the gathering night,
But in all self-abasement they
From the great battle passed away.

Oh, somewhere be it otherwise
Than under these occluding skies!
Somewhere, in unimagined ways,
Be scored their triumph and their praise!

Where'er they dwell, to earth unknown,
I am content if me they own
Among their number,— theirs forgot,
Unsung, unshrined, exalted not,—

And if their shining brows (unstarred)
But bend on me their long regard,
And if their silence saith, "Have peace!
From tears for us — or pæans, cease!"



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